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# A V E A T

ADDRESSED TO THE

CATHOLICS OF WORCESTER,

AGAINST THE

INUATING LETTER OF MR. WHARTON.

WILLIAM PILLING.

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*As ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists: whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us. For if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us. But they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us.*"

*1st of John, c. ii. v. 18, 19. Protestant Translation.*  
Whoever leaves the Church of Christ, can never attain the life of Christ. He is prophane, an alien, an enemy. He never have God for his Father, who has not the Church for his Mother. *St. Cyprian De unitate Ecclesie.*

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L O N D O N:

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A V A T

ADDRESSED TO THE

PROSECUTOR OF WORCESTER

AGAINST THE

STATUTE OF THE PARLIAMENT

OF WILLIAM PILLING

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WILLIAM PILLING  
PROSECUTOR



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# A C A V E A T

ADDRESSED TO THE

CATHOLICS OF WORCESTER,

AGAINST THE

INSINUATING LETTER OF Mr. WHARTON.

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**I**N this fluctuating age of novelties, when no principle of faith or morality can escape the sacrilegious attacks of impiety and heresy: when the Reformation itself is reformed, mangled and disfigured; when every day gives rise to some new-fangled system of brainless extravagance; it is not surprising that a number of upstart scribblers should intrude upon the public, and plague the serious and rational with their whimsical productions, as foreign to true religion as repugnant to common sense. Had only such triflers attacked the faith of the Catholic Church, I should not have thought them worthy of notice, as an answer would give them a degree of importance, which they do not really deserve.

But when a Catholic Clergyman not only abjures the faith of his ancestors, but publicly attacks the tenets of the *one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church*, and even joins the illiterate multitude in misrepresentation, declamation and falsehood, instead of reason and argument; then I think it is the duty of every minister of the Gospel to stand forth in defence of those tenets, which

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no time can alter, no force or violence can ever subvert.

I fear not the arguments of the pamphlet addressed to you. The author reasons no more correctly than those protestants, whom he describes, page 20. as throwing away much erudition and ingenuity in refuting pretensions to which Catholics never laid claim. The danger is from the name at the end of the letter; a letter written to the friends, the penitents of Mr. Wharton, purposely calculated to persuade them of his sincerity and conviction in renouncing that faith, which himself had taught them. The weak and the wavering are easily led astray by those in whom they had placed an unlimited confidence.

The intent of this tract is to warn you of the means of seduction, by which Mr. Wharton seeks to insinuate himself into your hearts and understandings; and to guard you against the snares in which he wishes to entangle your faith. I mean to proceed much in the same order, which he has laid down; and shall expose the fallacy of his reasoning, misapplication of principles and misrepresentation of tenets, as they occasionally occur in his pamphlet. I shall however sometimes invert the order, as it may suit my purpose: but never so as to give an uncandid account of his doctrines. There are many oversights of lesser note in Mr. Wharton, which I shall pass over without notice, lest I should tire the patience of the reader, by entering upon a serious dissertation in matters, which are little or nothing to the purpose, whether true or false. My intention is to defend the faith of the church, not to establish the opinions of schoolmen.

I shall not make any apology to you or to the public for appearing in print. The cause of truth must not be neglected. I know well that I am not able to copy the stile and elegance of Mr. Wharton; but the cause I undertake needs only the unaffected simplicity of solid argument, to support it against sophistical reasoning, however florid it may appear. Whoever is acquainted  
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with the disadvantages I labour under in this particular, will, I hope, give me credit for this undertaking, provided otherwise it answers his expectations in point of reason and argument.

For my own part, I shall think myself amply rewarded for my trouble; though but one among you should be supported, if wavering, or reclaimed, if seduced, by his *affectionate* address.

The first article worth notice is (page 7.) in the following words: "God requires no more of any man; than his true and hearty endeavours to be saved, and *their* endeavours can never be ineffectual, whose reason and conscience tell them, they are in the way to salvation."

The first part of this, *his leading principle*, is undoubtedly true, if rightly understood. We all know that God does not command impossibilities, as St Augustin expresses it: that he requires of us only *true and hearty endeavours*, and will himself supply every deficiency on our parts. But what application are we to make of this principle? Catholics say, that *true and hearty endeavours* suppose a man divested of inveterate prejudice and passion; above the feelings of partiality; and that every obstacle be removed, which might otherwise prevent the knowledge of truth, or impede the practice of virtue. Only these endeavours are such as can be called *true and hearty*, in the language of common sense. If a man has not removed every hindrance of the kind, he cannot be said to have done all that was in his power. The second part of the proposition must therefore be understood of *real reason*, and *true conscience*; in this sense most certainly reason and conscience are sure guides to salvation.

But is there no such thing as an *appearance of reason*, which may be mistaken for the *reality*? Have we not often heard of an erroneous conscience? Thousands of examples, both in Scripture and profane history, prove that a man may be persuaded into error and immorality in matters of religion, as well as into absurdity in philosophy; and will think nevertheless, that his judg-

ment is directed by reason, his conduct guided by his conscience. Was not the great Apostle of the Gentiles guided by his reason and conscience, when he bore so distinguished a part in the illegal, unjust and horrid murder of St. Stephen? Might he not have alledged reason and conscience for the motives of his conduct in persecuting the followers of Christ? Has not every error and novelty pleaded reason and conscience? From Simon Magus to the present blacksmith or weaver, who leaves his employment to teach his blasphemous nonsense to the weak and enthusiast, every innovator has laid claim to reason and conscience. The credulous Mahometan, the perverse and hardened Jew, the un-enlightened Gentile, and what is worse than all, the infamous group of philosophical Deists, plead reason and conscience in their defence. The celebrated Rousseau, in his *Emile* throughout, uses his reason in very elegant language to overturn the system of revelation.

Will Mr. Wharton allow all these to be in the way to salvation? Will he say to Rousseau, as he does to you Catholics of Worcester, in the same page, "If these faithful guides (reason and conscience) speak such a language to your hearts, continue to listen to their saving lessons; continue to be happy." If he does, adieu to his own creed. Whatever latitude he allows, he at least pretends to be a Christian; and therefore must admit the necessity of the Gospel dispensation in order to be saved. This however is destroyed, if he admits Rousseau as a *fellow-traveller in the same road to happiness*, page 14, from the plea of *reason and conscience*. No revelation will be necessary, no mysteries, no sacraments. The next step is to a system (fond child of deism) which deprives God of his justice and power, by asserting that he could not create man subject to punishment, however his crimes might insult the majesty of his Creator.

But if Mr. Wharton will not allow Rousseau to be a *fellow-traveller in the same road to happiness*, notwithstanding his plea of reason and conscience; Mr. Rousseau



seau has a right to address Mr. Wharton in his own words to you, *ibid.* "Let no security whatever, no conviction of your exclusive happiness so warp your understanding, or exulcerate your heart, as to make you pronounce condemnation upon those, who after consuming years in unbiassed enquiries, can discover *no revelation in the Bible, nor admit many doctrines, which that revelation proposes.* For your sake, I deprecate such unchristian usage, as well as for my own."

Mr. Rousseau has an equal right to address Mr. Wharton in these words, as Mr. Wharton has to deprecate this your unchristian usage; because he can discover "no unerring authority delegated to man, nor admit many doctrines, which that authority proposes." If reason and conscience authorise Mr. Wharton to dissent from us: reason and conscience will certainly exculpate Rousseau, if he differs in opinion from Mr. Wharton.

If then Mr. Wharton, by reason and conscience, means *real conviction* from *solid grounds*; or in other words *truth itself*, which darts conviction on the mind; then we admit the proposition; but it will be nothing to his purpose; for then the question returns in full force, who are those, on whose side only truth shews itself. But if by reason and conscience he understands *persuasion*, or if he rather chuses it, *personal conviction*, then let him answer J. J. Rousseau. I beg leave to inform him that "we may abuse the use of our reason, as well as the liberty of our will, and may be damned for the one as well as the other." Burnet's Exposition of the 39 Articles. Art. 19. page 248. 3d Edition, Dublin 1724.

I shall not take notice of Mr. Wharton's lamentation, page the 8th, nor of what he says of himself, page the 9th. I attack his errors, not his person.

I must transcribe a long paragraph from page the 9th, and the following. "There was a time, when, like you, I gloried in my religion; I daily thanked God, that I

" was not, like other men, heretics, schismatics, and infi-  
 " dels; I subscribed with unfeigned sincerity to that ar-  
 " ticle of your belief; *That the Roman church is the*  
 " *mother and mistress of all churches, and that out of her*  
 " *communion no salvation can be obtained.* I was per-  
 " suaded, that the arguments of her adversaries were  
 " lighter than chaff; though, at the same time, I should  
 " have deemed it an impiety to weigh them in the  
 " scales of impartiality and candour. Common sense  
 " informed me, that inquiry implied a doubt, whilst the  
 " voice of the church was loud in proclaiming, that to  
 " doubt of any doctrinal point was to be no longer a  
 " Roman catholic. Under such a dilemma the inqui-  
 " sitive faculties of the mind must remain in a state of  
 " torpid acquiescence, or be exerted only after a pre-  
 " vious and definitive judgment has been passed upon  
 " the truth, or falsity of the doctrines in debate. I was,  
 " therefore, soon convinced, that no *consistent* Roman  
 " catholic can be a candid inquirer in matters of religion.  
 " He cannot set out with that indifference to the truth  
 " or falsity of a tenet, which forms the leading feature  
 " of rational investigation." Then he quotes Mr. Be-  
 " rington, Scripture, and St. Chrysostom, to what purpose  
 I shall shortly discuss: and proceeds as follows; page 11.  
 " It soon became painful to regard such fellow-christians,  
 " some of whom are very near my heart, as straying  
 " widely from the only road to happiness, by refusing  
 " to submit to a church, out of the pale of which no sal-  
 " vation can be had. I dismissed the cruel idea with  
 " contempt and indignation. But with it a leading  
 " principle of my former belief was abandoned. I know  
 " that some of your late ingenious apologists in England,  
 " where a writer must affect to be liberal, if he mean to  
 " be read, have laboured hard to palliate the severity of  
 " this unpopular tenet. Others have rejected it, as no  
 " article of their creed. But neither the sophistry of  
 " the former, nor the inconsistency of the latter can do  
 " away a doctrine so expressly delivered in every pub-  
 " lic catechism, and profession of faith."

Mr.

Mr. Wharton cannot be ignorant of the intent and import of the article of Pope Pius's creed, I shall therefore take the liberty to assert, that he has wilfully *misinterpreted* and *misapplied* it. To prove this, it is necessary to explain, what the Catholic Church understands by the article, *Out of the Roman Catholic Church no salvation can be had*; and what may be lawfully deduced from it.

In the Apostles Creed we believe *a holy Catholic Church*. This belief most certainly imports, that our Divine Redeemer purchased, by his blood, a Church, which from the times of the apostles was to spread itself into all nations, and to continue thus diffused to the end of time. Protestants and Catholics again agree in this, that there is but *one Catholic church*, instituted by Christ. We do not say *Churches*, but *Church*. In fact, it is not possible, that two different Churches should be so universally diffused through the world as to be really *Catholic*.

I hope we shall also agree in another point; that this *one, holy, Catholic Church* is instituted as the only way to heaven; and therefore there is no salvation to be hoped for, but through the communion of this Church. It is not necessary to prove this; for I believe no one, who pretends to the name of Christian, will call it in question. However I beg leave to confirm this doctrine, from the authority of Dr. Pearson, in his Exposition of the Creed, Art. 9. "The necessity of believing  
" the holy Catholic Church appeareth first in this, that  
" Christ hath appointed it, as the only way to eternal  
" life. We read at the first, that the Lord added to the  
" church daily such as should be saved: what was then  
" daily done, hath been done since continually. Christ  
" never appointed two ways to heaven: nor did he  
" build a church to save some, and make another institution for other mens salvation. There is no other  
" name under heaven, given among men, by which we  
" must be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ: and that  
" name is no otherwise given under heaven, than in the  
" Church.



“ Church. As none were saved from the Deluge but  
 “ such as were within the ark of Noah;—so none shall  
 “ ever escape the eternal wrath of God, which belong  
 “ not to the Church of God.”

This learned protestant Divine needs no commen-  
 tator.

The doctrine of the Church of England is perhaps  
 more clear from her liturgy. See the Common Prayer  
 Book in the Third Collect for Good Friday, where the  
 Church prays for “ Jews, Turks, infidels and heretics,”  
 and begs Almighty God to “ take from them all igno-  
 “ rance and hardness of heart, and contempt of his  
 “ word, and to fetch them home to his flock, that they  
 “ may be saved, &c.” Two things are here intimated,  
 First, that as those Jews, &c. must be brought to the flock  
 of Christ, which certainly means his Church, in order  
 to be saved; they cannot be saved unless they be united  
 to this Church. Secondly that *ignorance* is here joined  
 to hardness of heart, and contempt of the word of God,  
 as an obstacle to salvation: the Church of England does  
 not therefore admit of Mr. Wharton’s *reason* and *con-*  
*science* in the latitude he gives them.

In a word it is plain from fact, and from the consent  
 of all Christians, that there is no salvation out of the  
*one, holy and Catholic Church*. Now it is a matter of fact,  
 which Mr. Wharton must allow, that the only Church  
 existing, which is really *Catholic*, or universally spread  
 through all nations, is that Church, which is in commu-  
 nion with the See of Rome, vulgarly called the *Roman*  
*Catholic Church*. The article of the creed is sufficiently  
 clear: the application of it to that Church, which is in  
 communion with the Roman Pontiff, wholly depends  
 on this simple question, is that Church alone *catholic*, or  
*universal*? If it is, then the article of Pope Pius’s Creed  
 is barely an application of the 9th article of the apostles  
 Creed: and the justness of this application rests on a  
 fact of public notoriety. But if the Church in commu-  
 nion with the See of Rome be not *universal*; then let  
 any man living point out one that is so.

This



This being the doctrine of the Church, Catholics have a just right to say, that no salvation can be hoped for, out of the communion of the Roman Catholic Church. But we all know there are two exceptions to this general rule. The first is the case of *invincible ignorance*, when a person is out of the visible communion of the Church for want of knowledge, which it is not in his power to acquire. Every Catholic will allow salvation to such a person, provided he dies in the state of grace. The second is the case of *inevitable necessity*, when a person wishes to enter the visible communion of the Church, but cannot remove the obstacles, which hinder him from becoming one of her members. For example, a person who is preparing for baptism, or an excommunicated person, who repents, and wishes to be reconciled; but if either should die before their wishes are accomplished, without fault or neglect on their part, their being out of the visible communion of the Church, will not be the cause of their condemnation. They are in her communion, as much as heart and desire can effect, and God will not impute to them their being out. This is the belief of every *consistent Catholic*.

But as to the application of these principles to particular persons, we have no rule laid down by the Church. We are all taught not to judge any one. Who among Protestants is in the case of invincible ignorance, or inevitable necessity, we must all leave to the inscrutable judgments of God; he alone is the searcher of hearts, and will render to every one according to his works. We tremble indeed for every one, who is separated from the visible communion of the *one, holy, Catholic Church*, and heartily pray for their return to us: we fear lest their passions, not necessity, should be the cause of their separation; and also lest they should die without sanctifying grace, however *invincible their ignorance*, for want of those means of sanctification, the sacraments of penance, eucharist, and extreme unction, which we believe are only administered in our communion.

This

This, I say, is the belief of every *consistent* Catholic. If any one has taken upon him to determine who, among Protestants are, or are not in the case of *invincible ignorance*, or *inevitable necessity*, he has done this from his own head, without any warrant from his Church.

The assertion, page 12, "That Protestants of sense and education are in a state of damnation, must be the religious belief of a consistent Roman Catholic," is false. We do not indeed understand how men of sense and education can stand out against the irresistible evidence of the Catholic religion: but that they may not be kept from embracing it, either by invincible ignorance, or inevitable necessity, is neither the belief of any consistent Catholic, nor his business to inquire.

Many and various are the obstacles to a search after truth. Prejudice of education is hard to be overcome. The feelings and passions have a great sway over our habits of thinking. The variety of mens occupations, which engross the time of a great majority of mankind: all these are very great obstructions to information. But in this particular case there is one reason of more weight than all the rest. The misrepresentations and calumnies, sucked in at the breast by every Protestant, make the Catholic religion appear so odious, that it does not seem to deserve an investigation. How far any of these reasons, or altogether, are favourable to Protestants, must be left to the mercy of God. That they may serve for a compleat excuse for them all, is the sincere wish and fervent prayer of every *consistent Catholic*.

In the origin of any public defection from the Church, the grounds of the claims of innovators against her are generally better known, than at this distance from the beginning of the Reformation. When Luther first broached his impieties, most men of any information knew, that passion not truth was the main spring of his conduct: at present the generality receive their information from their parents, who discourse of the cause

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and history of the Reformation as they are variously affected. Few read the histories of those times, or only read such as are evidently interested. Very few are capable of scrutinizing these matters according to the strict rules of criticism. Thus a great majority of our separated brethren receive their whole knowledge of history, the same as their religion, from the authority of their parents, schoolmasters, or teachers, without any examination at all of either facts or principles; and think themselves authorized to believe implicitly what they hear from those of whose candour and veracity they have no manner of suspicion. Hence my private opinion is, that many Protestants, who would be excused by men, may hope for indulgence before a more *merciful God*. I could say much more upon this head: but as I have already remarked, it is not the business of any Catholic to inquire into these matters. Thus much I am confident of, that no one will ever be condemned by the indulgent God of the Christians, who is not unworthy his mercy. Whether Protestant, Jew or Hottentot, they will all meet the sweets of his goodness, if they do not force him to exert the rigors of his justice, by resisting his divine decrees. But how he will bring them to the knowledge of those means of grace, which he has deemed necessary to salvation, is a mystery which no man living is authorized to pronounce upon.

Thus I think it is evident that Mr. Wharton has perverted the sense of the above quoted Catholic tenet, by giving it too great a latitude; and has also misapplied it, by supposing that Catholics, by virtue of that principle, are disposed to condemn every Protestant they meet. He has also perverted the sense of the argument, page 12. "Protestants allow salvation to Roman Catholics, but Roman Catholics do not allow salvation to Protestants: therefore the Roman Catholic religion is the safest of the two." This argument, as it stands, is inconclusive, as I could shew by the rules of syllogisms, were it not pedantism, in a mat-  
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ter of this moment. Let it run thus; Protestants allow the Catholic religion to be a safe way to salvation; but Catholics do not allow the Protestant religion to be a safe way to salvation: therefore the Catholic religion is the safest of the two: for that must be the safest, which is allowed to be safe by both parties. In this sense I admit the argument, and will abide by the consequence; but not as it stands in Mr. Wharton's letter, because of the application to particular persons, which is no part of the belief of any Catholic.

If it be said, that some controvertists have urged the argument as Mr. Wharton has formed it; which I shall not give myself the trouble to examine; I must beg leave to say, that I am no ways answerable for the false reasoning of any man. I agree with every Catholic in points of faith, but am not bound to use or defend their arguments.

I know of no Catholic controvertist, who has "laboured hard to palliate the severity of this unpopular tenet." If any man should deny it to be an article of his creed, as explained above, I shall deny him to be a Catholic any more than Mr. Wharton. However I am not answerable for either the *sophistry* of the former, or the *inconsistency* of the latter, as Mr. Wharton calls it.

Mr. Wharton may possibly think, that I have explained this principle in as great a latitude, as is necessary, to prove it uncharitable and unpopular. But I hope the unpopularity of a tenet is not a demonstration of its falsehood. We must not set up the passions of men, which revolt at doctrines of a supernatural order, against the decrees of heaven. I grant indeed that it is very absurd to "plead the uncharitableness of any tenet as an argument for its truth." But charity does not authorize us to allow eternal felicity to those who have no title to it from the promises of Christ. Hence unless Mr. Wharton can prove this doctrine false, the sarcasm of uncharitableness is no argument against it.

But



But why is this doctrine uncharitable and unpopular? Because it denies salvation to every one, who, by his own fault, is out of the communion of the Catholic Church. Every one has a right to adopt whatever system of religion seems most consistent with the principles of revelation; and it must be uncharitable to regard him as straying from the only road to happiness, because he does not just think as we do. This is a curious piece of business! Catholics and Protestants agree that Christ has instituted only one church as the road to heaven: we all confess that this Church of Christ always was, and must always be *Catholic* or *universal*: and plain matter of fact declares, that the only Church which is *catholic*, is the Church in communion with the See of Rome: a very clear consequence is, that whoever is out of her communion by his own fault, does not belong to the Church of God; nor of course can he ever be saved, even according to Mr. Pearson quoted before.

Granting for a moment that we are mistaken; that the Roman Church, as it is vulgarly called, is not the true Church of Christ, the only just consequence is, that we want understanding in the application; but not charity. Deception is a defect in the understanding: but uncharitableness is the fault of a poisoned heart. They differ widely. No man is defective in charity, if he wishes all the good to his neighbour, which he wishes to himself. Mr. Wharton would have a hard task to prove that Catholics do not wish every Protestant to be saved. Catholics have undertaken more missions among infidels, and reduced more separated Christians to their Communion than ever Protestants have done. If we are allowed to reason from facts, Catholics will appear to be more interested in the salvation of men, than their Protestant brethren, who very *humanely* leave every one in his own *road to happiness*, however absurd his religion may be, without giving themselves much trouble to convince him of his error. If a man's reason is deceived, if his conscience is erroneous, and this by

his own fault, what will either or both contribute to his salvation? or how would our charitably supposing him to be in the way to heaven, help him on towards it.

St. Paul very uncharitably excludes from the kingdom of heaven, *adulterers, fornicators, drunkards, heretics*, and a number of other fashionable Christians of our times, Gal. v. verse 19, and the following; what might not any of these proscribed persons say to Mr. Wharton? I hope he is not so *charitable* as to allow them to be in the way to salvation. It is in vain to quote scripture. Catholics have as good a right to exclude *heretics* from the kingdom of heaven, by the authority of St. Paul, as any man living has to exclude *drunkards*, from the same chapter and verse. Should Mr. Wharton say that our application of the word *heresy* is wrong, let him then call us fools, and prove it too; for we shall not take his word: but we disclaim his accusation of uncharitableness.

The Mahometans are no where mentioned in scripture. By what rule will Mr. Wharton exclude them from heaven? he admits no other rule of faith. No controverted text will satisfy him, and if I understand him right, every text is controverted, which is either denied or explained away by the adversary. Page 24. "Do a few controverted texts of the scripture make "infallibility as evident to reason, as &c." In this sense almost every text of scripture has been controverted; nay the whole bible is denied by the Deists. Mr. Wharton is therefore uncharitable and unchristian in excluding *drunkards, adulterers, deists, &c.* from heaven, who cannot discover his explication of St. Paul to be the genuine sense of the scriptures; or otherwise cannot discover any revelation in the bible.

Jean-Jaques Rousseau calls the doctrine *Barbarous*, which excludes from heaven a person, who dies without baptism. The supposition of original sin imputes an injustice to God. Let any one read his *Emile*. What will Mr. Wharton answer to this? The charge of *barbarity* is something stronger than that of *uncharitableness*.

I cannot

I cannot dismiss this subject without just hinting at two expressions of Mr. Wharton, the first page 11, "If," says he, pure and undefiled religion with God and the Father, be this, to visit widows and orphans in their tribulations, and to keep oneself unstained from this world, I think, I know several, who have a good claim to this religion." I think several such may be found among Jews and Turks. This is Rousseau's religion. Mr. Wharton sometimes forgets that the gospel dispensation requires a right faith to salvation, besides the merit of good works. *Without faith it is impossible to please God*, if we believe St. Paul, Heb. xi. v. 6.

The second is page the 12th, where he mentions the *cruel heresy of the persecutors*. I condemn persecution for religious tenets, which do not otherwise affect the peace of society; but am quite at a loss to find how Mr. Wharton can make it heresy. It is a sin against charity, but not against faith. *It is contrary to the doctrine of Jesus Christ*, says Mr. Wharton: be it so; and consequently heretical: this I deny. Adultery and murder are contrary to the doctrine of Christ; but are not heresies. I shall not enlarge upon this odious topic, which has been treated with too much acrimony, by both Protestants and Catholics. I wish however our separated brethren would be candid enough to attend to matter of fact; they would discover that the Catholic religion was first introduced into almost every country, where it exists; by prayer, preaching and miracles; never by open force, violence, bloodshed, and rebellion against the civil power. I shall beg leave to add, that the inquisition in every religion is a political institution.

There is another capital error in the extract from Mr. Wharton above. He asserts, that no consistent Roman Catholic can be a candid inquirer in matters of religion. Inquiry, according to him, implies a doubt. Rational investigation presupposes indifference to the truth or falsity of the tenet under examination. But no Catholic can doubt of any doctrine of his Church, with-



out ceasing to be a member of her communion. The inquisitive faculties of every Catholic must then remain in a state of torpid acquiescence, or be exerted after a previous definitive sentence has been passed on the doctrines in debate.

Thus you Catholics of Worcester must be inconsistent, or you cannot be Catholics from rational conviction. I suppose this conviction must be the result of *rational investigation*, which no consistent Roman Catholic can ever make, according to this doctrine. If this be true, how inconsistent is Mr. Wharton in his words to you, page the 7th, "If these faithful guides (reason and conscience) speak such a language to your hearts, continue to listen to their saving lessons, continue to be happy." What have reason and conscience to do, where no rational inquiry can be made? how can reason speak to the heart of a man, who cannot consistently exert the inquisitive faculties of the mind, but after a previous definitive judgment has been pronounced on the doctrines in debate. If Mr. Wharton is consistent, he must say, "You Roman Catholics can never be candid inquirers; you cannot institute a rational investigation. Your persuasion then must be grounded on a torpid acquiescence to the doctrines of your teachers; can never be the result of conviction. You cannot adhere to your communion from true principles of *reason and conscience*, however you may flatter yourselves that either or both speak the language of salvation to your hearts." From this doctrine it evidently follows, that the *endeavours* of Roman Catholics can never be *true and hearty*; that *reason or conscience* cannot tell them they are in the way to salvation; and finally that *no consistent Roman Catholic can be in the way to salvation*. This falls into the barbarous *tenet* (which) laid the first foundation for the cruel heresy of the persecutors; and is inconsistent with Mr. Wharton's principles; though a direct consequence of his doctrine of *rational inquiry*.

If Mr. Wharton be examined by his own rules, he will not appear a *candid inquirer*. Page the 11th, he gives



gives us the rise and progress of his investigation. His intimate connections with many valuable Protestants (*not the investigation of their tenets*) enlarged his ideas; and weaned his mind from the narrowness of a system. In proportion as he became acquainted with their *persons* (*not their doctrines*) he ceased to view their principles through the medium of prejudice. It then became painful to view those he *loved* as straying widely from the only road to happiness; he therefore dismissed the cruel idea, with contempt and indignation, and with that a leading principle of his former belief; the inerrancy of the Church.

Thus Mr. Wharton passed rapidly from the torpid acquiescence, under which he had laboured so long, to a flat rejection of one of the leading principles of the Catholic Church, without any other reason assigned than *his intimacy with the persons of some valuable Protestants*. He did not examine their doctrines till afterwards. To follow his own rules, he should first have doubted, then examined their tenets: this he did not. But rejected a leading tenet of his former belief, barely from his familiarity with Protestants, and his delicate and charitable feelings for their salvation. This tender sympathy proves that he was not wholly indifferent to the truth or falsity of the doctrines in debate. In a word Mr. Wharton did not examine his sources of religious information till he had passed a previous definitive sentence on the nullity of the Church's claim to infallibility. He is not then a candid inquirer, in matters of religion.

Moreover as a previous doubt is necessary for a candid inquiry, why did not Mr. Wharton doubt also of the Scriptures themselves; why did he not throw off that *torpid acquiescence* to the existence of revelation? This was as necessary as the other. This however he did not. "For my own part (page 14.) no sooner had I relinquished this unwarrantable tenet, than doubts began to arise concerning some others, with which it is so nearly connected."

No doubts are even hinted at except about the tenets of Catholics. Page the 15th, "To trace each religious truth to its genuine sources of reason and revelation, I considered as the most noble employment, &c." He had then no doubt concerning the existence of revelation, nor the inspiration of the bible. He did not set out with that indifference to the truth or falsity of these tenets, which forms the leading feature of rational investigation. Then he has not made a candid inquiry into these capital points. He labours still, under a torpid acquiescence, or has passed a previous definitive judgment on these doctrines, in debate between him and the Deists. If this doctrine be admitted, three-fourths at least of mankind would be thrown into a state of scepticism, out of which they could never extricate themselves, by any inquiry within the sphere of their capacity.

It would indeed be torpid acquiescence to the voice of the pastors, if they proposed the doctrines of the Church, without giving sufficient reason for their credibility. But this is not the case. Among Catholics, several come to us from other communions; these I hope pass from doubt to conviction. Others are educated among us; and you all know with what care and diligence the pastors of the Church propose to the tender minds of youth the motives of credibility, to convince them of the necessity of believing, whatever the *one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church* proposes as an article of faith. If these reasons amount to conviction, what necessity of doubting? We may doubt when the reasons do not sufficiently strike the mind or arrest its assent: but where the reasons are clear and strong, the mind will not wait for further examination. I beg leave to add, that a man may institute a rational investigation about the existence of a Deity; but I defy any man living either to doubt of it, or to set out with indifference to the truth or falsity of this point.

I must now examine the authorities quoted page the 10th. The text from 1 Thess. v. "prove all things, hold fast that which is good," signifies no more than a warning to the

Theologo-

Theſſalonians not to receive every ſort of doctrine propoſed to them, but to try and examine the tenets, and thiſe very Catholic will allow. The Apoſtle does not ſay by any means, that this proof is to be made by private examine of the ſcriptures. Nor does St. Peter, 1 Ep. iii. 15. where he wiſhes every Chriſtian to be ready to "give an answer of the hope which is in him." This may be done by every Catholic without examining the ſcriptures. St. Peter does not aſſign that method.

The *poſitive injunction* of the beloved diſciple of Jeſus, "not to believe every ſpirit, but try the ſpirits whether they be of God," is indeed of a very ſerious nature. At that time it was meant againſt thoſe who denied the divinity of the Son of God, as appears from the following verſe, 1 Ep. John iv. 2. "Hereby ye know the ſpirit of God; every ſpirit that confeſſeth that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh is of God." At preſent it may very properly be applied to warn Chriſtians not to believe every ſpirit of error, which daily rears up its towering head againſt the eſtabliſhed authority of the Catholic Church; but can never be ſtrained to ſignify that Chriſtians are to try every doctrine by private examine. St. John does not ſend them to ſcripture, but orders them to compare the doctrines of thoſe falſe teachers, whom he mentions, with the doctrine of the incarnation, which he had preached to them. I fear this text is againſt Mr. Wharton.

I could wiſh that Mr. Wharton would be as candid with us as he deſires us to be in our reſearches after truth. He tries and examines every Catholic tenet by the teſt of ſcripture. He muſt have clear texts, no ways controverted or ambiguous; yet in this leading tenet, which forms the wall of ſeparation between the Reformation and the Catholic Church, he brings texts, which he knows well are not only *controverted*, but even may be as properly explained to favour our principles as his own: at leaſt, I think it is evident that not one of them contains one word about private examine. Let him aſſign at leaſt one text in the bible, which  
clearly



clearly and without ambiguity, shews that the scriptures are to be interpreted by the private judgment of every private person. But as this cannot be done, let him mark out a passage in the bible, which in the same clear manner pronounces, that the authority of the Church is not to be minded in matters of religion. He will not certainly mention the 18th chapter of St. Matthew, "But if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be to thee as an heathen man and a publican." *Protestant Translation.*

Mr. Berrington only pleads for civil toleration, and as I hope no one intends to persecute Mr. Wharton, I shall say no more of this matter.

The note in the same page must not be neglected: "not to mention many other ancient fathers, who advise us to have recourse to the scriptures in all doubts about religion, I will only lay before the reader two remarkable passages of St. Chrysostom. This eloquent Doctor shall speak for all the rest." Then he gives us a long quotation from the imperfect work of homilies on St. Matthew. The Fathers, one and all, have referred us to scripture for the decision of all our difficulties; it is needless to mention them; St. Chrysostom speaks for them all. But unhappily for Mr. Wharton, he neither speaks for any of the rest, nor for himself. That work is not the composition of this eloquent Doctor; and this Mr. Wharton knows very well. I cannot suppose him ignorant of what every smetterer in theology would have told him, had he objected this text in the schools. That this work was evidently written in latin; that the style of this work is quite different from that of St. Chrysostom; and that the Arian heresy is manifestly defended and supported in it; which last alone proves to demonstration, that it is not the work of St. Chrysostom. I suppose Mr. Wharton trusted to the authority of his teachers, when he gave this answer formerly; I doubt not but he has given this answer, and I will make bold to assert that he never found any reason to invalidate it, in any researches made afterwards.



wards. See the Maurist. edit. of St. Chrysostom, T. 6. in the Diatriba.

After a pompous quotation of the Arian author, Mr. Wharton cannot help asking "Whether such would now be the advice of a Catholic Doctor? Would not such a person be rather discouraged from consulting the scriptures, and referred to the decisions of Popes and Councils?" To which I answer; if any one doubts the authority of the Church, no consistent Catholic Doctor *in his senses* would ever refer him to the decrees of Popes or Councils, but to the reasons which prove the authority of the Church; and would point out several texts of scripture, which *prove that doctrine*.

But if any one, otherwise convinced of the necessity of Church authority, doubts whether any particular tenet be the doctrine of the Church, then I think there would be no impropriety in referring such a person to her decrees. The decisions of Popes are out of the question, unless they are in doctrinal points, and even then are not irrevocable definitions unless the Church receives them, and by this renders them her own.

The 13th Hom. on the 2d Ep. to the Cor. is certainly the work of St. Chrysostom. He had a right to desire the faithful not to mind what *this or that man asserts for truth*, especially when scripture is *plainly against him*; but there is not one word about the authority of the Church. Mr. Wharton concludes; "How one of the most enlightened Doctors of antiquity could write this passage, and yet regard the doctrine of private judgment as heretical is a paradox, which all the finest spun subtilities of modern school-men would find it difficult to unravel." I own I cannot comprehend how Mr. Wharton can have the confidence to write this, against his own conviction. He knows well that any moderate student in any university would tell him, that what the eloquent Doctor says is indeed very true, but is nothing to the purpose. The fact is. St. Chrysostom in that homily throughout is striving to prove, that poverty is preferable to riches; a *very unpopular*  
*tenet*

*tenet at this time!* he gathers a number of scriptural texts, which go home to the purpose, and then concludes: "Wherefore I beg and entreat that all of you  
 " would neglect what *this or that man* (not the Church)  
 " asserts for truth about *these matters*, and that you  
 " would investigate all *these things* from the scriptures." We do not deny but that a person should have recourse to scripture against the private opinions of men, when they are plain and decisive; but Mr. Wharton should have proved that every controversy ought to be finally terminated by the scriptures alone, interpreted by private judgment, and I defy any man living to prove this from St. Chrysostom. He expressly says *about these matters; all these things; not several inquiries*; Mr. Wharton has added this out of his own head, because he felt he could prove nothing without it. Is this candour?

Let Mr. Wharton read this eloquent Doctor, C. 4. hom. 2. in 2 ad Thess. where explaining the words of St. Paul, which give an equal authority to tradition, as to the scriptures themselves, C. 2. Therefore "Brethren stand fast and hold the traditions ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle:" the eloquent Doctor proceeds: "Hence it is clear that they (the apostles) did not deliver all by epistle, but many things without writing; and these also are worthy of credit. Wherefore let us also look upon the tradition of the Church as deserving credit. It is tradition; inquire no further."

*How one of the most enlightened Doctors of antiquity could write this, and still be favourable to the doctrine of private judgment is a paradox, which the subtlety of even Mr. Wharton will find it impossible to unravel.*

I have very little to say concerning the conflicts in Mr. Wharton's mind, on which he enlarges very diffusely, pages 15, 16, 17 and 18. I must however beg leave to remark, that the moment he threw off the dead weight of authority; "the glorious task of tracing every religious truth to its genuine sources of reason and  
 " revelation"

"revelation" became absolutely necessary; so that I think he might have submitted to this task without so much reluctance. "The mind recovered its natural spring and energy, and indulged itself in the warm feelings of expanded benevolence." He was not then affected with any disagreeable feelings; but joy and gladness had taken possession of his heart. He cast off the dead weight of authority, previous to any *examine*, except that of his own feelings; and was a very good protestant before he turned over a single leaf in the bible! ! !

I think he might have spared the *remains* of the Bulla Cœnæ, which he knows is now dead throughout Europe; and never was in force either in France or England. He may say that the law against those who used condemned books is still in force; granted, against those who have not leave to read them; but Mr. Wharton had not only leave to read them himself, but had power also to grant that leave to whom he thought proper; therefore his complaint on this head is mere cant. The pastors of the Church have always endeavoured to keep their flock at a distance from poisonous pastures; if this is a mistake, it is an innocent one. I think the pastors of the Church of England would do well to forbid the reading of Hume, Rousseau, Voltaire, &c. These *authors* are calculated to destroy all feelings of religion, but by no means to give religious information. If this should seem above the power of episcopacy, or contrary to *private judgment*, an Act of Parliament, with the royal assent, might safely venture upon it: since such an act may alter the religion of the country; though established by the authority of God himself. *Blackstone.*

I think his note, page the 16th, is as much for the sake of a sarcasm against the benevolent Ganganelli, as out of compliment to the society of which he was formerly a member. I shall not pretend either to defend the Pope, or accuse the Jesuits. I respect that authority, which equally forbids their cause to be attacked and



and defended. We may reasonably suppose our superiors are better informed in matters of this moment, than we can be from our private information.

The Society had deserved the favour and friendship of many; but they had incurred the displeasure of more powerful adversaries; and this, for any thing I know, barely from their eminence in learning and virtue. I never knew what reasons France or Spain had to suppress that Society in their respective dominions. In Portugal indeed a sort of reason was given, which the wisest and best men looked upon as a trick of state. But suppose there had been some grounds of complaint, this should not have reflected on the Society at large. The Jesuits were no more accountable for the conduct of Malagrida, even suppose it the worst, than they are now for the defection of Mr. Wharton. However this be, the Pope was solicited by these three crowned heads, and possibly also by the Emperor: his recent conduct makes this more than bare conjecture. Now I think we may fairly gather from the universally known character of that amiable Pontiff, that he never would have suppressed such a learned and useful Society, if he could otherwise have preserved the peace of the Church. In this case I think a religious silence on both sides was the only means to preserve the tranquility of the Catholic world. An appeal to the public, besides disturbing the peace of society in general, would have been impertinent to the purpose. The public were incompetent to judge, in this affair of universal concern, for want of general information; and were moreover divided in sentiment. Some would have espoused the cause of Ganganelli; others that of the Society. The only consequence must have been animosity and recrimination. No one could ever have put an end to the dispute. The laws of no particular country could ever be universally binding. There was then no appeal to be made, except to a general Council; and I fancy none will be held before it is too late. Besides the respectful silence of the members of that Society proves that they would



not make this appeal if they had an opportunity of doing it.

Mr. Wharton gives himself much trouble, page the 20th, to prove *against Catholics*, what they all learn in their catechism, *that some points of belief are not found in the scriptures*. He has this remarkable expression. "This perhaps is a fact which you never suspected." I am confident that no Catholic in Worcester ever suspected this from Mr. Wharton. Did he not teach you himself, that some tenets of faith were not written, but handed down by tradition from father to son in all ages down to us? Did you Catholics of Worcester give so little attention to the catechism, which he himself had taught you, as not to suspect a term of Catholic communion to be in it? This is a paradox indeed.

He proceeds: "Transubstantiation, or the conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood of Christ, is an essential article of the Roman Catholic religion: but is this article *clearly and evidently* delivered in any passage of the bible? Hear what your most eminent Doctors have written upon the subject." Then he quotes Bellarmine, Scotus, Melchior Canus and Alphonsus de Castro. Mr. Wharton is very ungenerous in his method of reasoning. He ought not to quote any authority but the written word of God. He should have examined that, and have candidly tried whether he could from thence point out a more direct argument against our principles. A plain proof from scripture against us would have been home to the question. He knows well this cannot be found, and therefore has recourse to *old authors*, who would have remained quiet on the shelves of libraries, and in time have mouldered into dust, without being taken down for use, had not Mr. Wharton disturbed their repose, and dragged them into the field of controversy, to support a ruinous cause, as absurd in itself, as foreign to their tenets.

The first modern reformer said, he did not care if a thousand Gregories and Augustins were against him; he even boasts that he once stood alone against the whole world. In this indeed he did wrong. The sentiments of the ancient fathers, venerable for their learning and sanctity, are of great weight with every one, who has any respect for antiquity. But those scholastic authors, quoted by Mr. Wharton, are nothing to the purpose, whatever were their sentiments. These authorities are worse than controverted texts. They are a *dead weight of authority*, with which we never mean to burden our memories. It matters not whether they be Doctors, saints or martyrs: the Catholic Church never gave them these titles for supporting opinions contrary to her doctrines, if ever they did it. It is very easy to wrest an author from his own meaning, and make him teach doctrines he never thought of; especially if a little ingenuity be used in adding a few words, or cutting short a quotation. Were it not for the sake of shewing Mr. Wharton's skill in this particular, I would not give myself the trouble of looking into one of those scholastic authors. No Catholic will seek for his faith in their writings; nor will he believe them, if they teach any doctrines contrary to the faith of the Church. In a word those scholastic divines are of no weight with either Mr. Wharton, or with us; to what purpose then are they brought in? I can only see one intent, and this they answer very well; they perplex an unlearned reader, and make it a hard task to answer, on account of the difficulty of *falsifying* the quotations.

As to Bellarmine I shall only remark, that he thought the doctrine of transubstantiation so clearly express'd in the scriptures, that it claims the assent of every dispassionate man; then according to Bellarmine Mr. Wharton must be a *prejudiced* man, for refusing his assent. If this will satisfy Mr. Wharton, I am content.

Scotus maintained that the real presence was an article of faith from the beginning of the church, but thought that the strict logical sense of the words, *this is my*

*my body*, did not plainly express the doctrine of transubstantiation. But he says expressly, that the *inspired sense* of these words must import transubstantiation. His reason is remarkable; because the same Holy Ghost, who dictated the words to the inspired penman, manifested the true sense of them, by the declaration of the church. He is indeed deceived in thinking that the doctrine of transubstantiation was not an article of faith before the council of Lateran, as I shall shortly prove. But upon the whole he is much stronger against Mr. Wharton than he is against us. I think then I may leave him with this remark of Bellarmine, L. 3. de Euch. c. 23. "I wish Kemnitius and other Lutherans would follow this way of speaking of *Scotus*, we should then have no dispute."

Melchior Canus, Loc. Com. Lib. 3. fund. 3. says, that the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son, and the consubstantiality of the Three divine persons are not clearly expressed in the scriptures any more than transubstantiation. Will Mr. Wharton reject these *essential* tenets because Melchior Canus thinks they are only obscurely delivered in the bible? I hope not. Why then should we be bound by his authority.

As eighteen years study in an university had not made me acquainted with the great name Mr. Wharton gives to Alphonsus de Castro, I was determined to seek him out, and examine his sentiments. After some search, I found him buried in dust, for want of use. I found indeed that Mr. Wharton's quotation, Vocab. Indulg. was just, as far as it went: but he did not wish to give the sentiment of Alphonsus, or he would not have stopped short where he did.

The words immediately following those which Mr. Wharton has given us, explain his faith in this particular: "In old authors, says he, there is seldom any mention made of the transubstantiation of the bread into the body of Christ; much seldomer of the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son." Then he concludes: "Nevertheless who but a heretic will dare to deny these things,



" because they are not mentioned in *ancient authors*,  
 " under the *same names*." It will require more fine-  
 spun subtlety than any man living is master of, to wrest  
 this so far as to be favourable to Mr. Wharton.

I thought the place quoted a very improper one to  
 discover the true meaning of Alphonsus about the eu-  
 charist, and therefore turned to the place where he  
 treats the doctrine of transubstantiation. There hæc.  
 5. he says: " Wherefore these testimonies are sufficient  
 " to prove against him (Luther) that transubstantiation  
 " is not new, nor only of three hundred years standing,  
 " as he asserts, but much more ancient, even from the  
 " beginning of the Church. Should he contend that  
 " the word is new; we do not mind words, but things.  
 " To inquire into the properties of words is the task of  
 " Grammarians, not the business of Divines:" and after  
 saying more to the same purpose, he concludes: " but  
 " whether it (the word transubstantiation) expresses the  
 " thing properly, elegantly or politely, I do not care,  
 " provided it teaches faithfully and catholicly."

Mr. Wharton attempts to prove, that the doctrine of  
 transubstantiation is not *clearly* and *evidently* delivered  
 in the bible: instead of examining the bible, he brings  
 scholastic divines, of no authority among either Prote-  
 stants or Catholics. The first Bellarmine is against  
 him, if he is a *dispassionate man*. The second, Scotus,  
 is a very good Catholic in this particular; let Mr.  
 Wharton join Scotus, and we shall be of the same com-  
 munion. The third, Melchior Canus, is as much a-  
 gainst Mr. Wharton, if he admits the Trinity, as he is  
 against us. The fourth, Alphonsus de Castro, is only  
 half quoted; and, of course, he is made to say what he  
 never dreamed of; besides he never mentions scripture,  
 but only says that the terms just mentioned are not  
 found in *old authors*: but never so much as hints that  
 the doctrines he mentions were not found in *old authors*,  
 as to the sense, though not *under the same names*.

Page 21. Mr. Wharton exercises his ingenuity to  
 prove, that the power of forgiving sins, as he calls it,



is not found in scripture. " But Peter Lombard, the famous *master of the sentences*, the Newton, the Aristotle of scholastic divines, was so far from discovering this prerogative in the scriptures, that he rejects it at large, and is supported in his opinion by almost all the ancient schoolmen of his times. Their doctrine is thus compendiously delivered by Cardinal Hugo, who lived at that period: The priest cannot bind, or loosen the sinner *with* or *from* the bond of the fault, or the *punishment*; but only *declare* him to be bound or loosened; as the levitical priest did not infect, or cleanse the leper, but only declared him infected or clean."

Here again Mr. Wharton quits his only rule of faith, and has recourse to scholastic divines to discover, whether the power of forgiving sins be found in the bible. As he knew that most of you Catholics of Worcester had never heard the name of Peter Lombard, he tells you that he is the Newton, the Aristotle of scholastic divines. But he might as well have quoted Aristotle himself. By his method of quoting the two authors, he never looked into either of them, as will shortly appear.

Peter Lombard, in the place quoted by Mr. Wharton, Lib. 4. Dist. 8. e, f. does not treat about penance, but the eucharist, and proves the Catholic doctrine of the real presence and transubstantiation down to the end of the 13th Dist. The 14th Dist. begins about penance: of which he teaches that it is a sacrament. That the power of the keys was given to the Church: and quotes the text of St. John, c. xx. *whose sins ye forgive, they are forgiven, &c.* and proves at large the necessity of confession. Dist. 17. he has these remarkable words: " For as interior penance is commanded us, so is *oral confession*:—hence whoever has not a desire (*votum*) of confession, he is not a true penitent. For as the remission of sin is a gift of God, so also penance and confession, by which sin is blotted out, cannot be but

“from God.” In the same Dist. under the letter d. he says: “From this and many other reasons it undoubtedly appears, that we must first offer our confession to God, then to a priest, nor can we otherwise gain the entrance of paradise, if there be an opportunity of doing it.” The 18th Dist. begins as follows: “Here it is commonly asked, if the sin is intirely forgiven by God, through the contrition of the heart, what then is afterwards so given by the priest.”

This question unravels the whole difficulty. Peter Lombard, and several divines of those times, among whom was the author *said to be* Cardinal Hugo, held that perfect contrition was a previous disposition necessary to receive the sacrament of penance: and as they knew that perfect contrition always restored the sinner to grace and favour; they must of course think that the absolution of the priest could not bind or loosen with or from the bond contracted by the guilt of sin, or the punishment due to it; because these bonds were always loosened by contrition, previous to absolution. But they all held penance to be a sacrament, the necessity of confession, as an essential part of it, and the use of the keys in the priestly absolution. How does this prove that Peter Lombard rejects this doctrine *at large*? This will appear still more evident from the *unknown author* quoted by Mr. Wharton under the name of Cardinal Hugo. I am sorry to be forced to bring forth his unintelligible jargon; but it is not my fault. He says then, *in Matth. xvi.* “There is a kind of bond of the fault; and there is a kind of bond of the punishment. The first is the bond of captivity, by which a man is detained so that he cannot escape. The second is the bond of servitude, by which a man is bound to give usury to the Devil. The third is the bond of eternal damnation. The fourth is the bond of expiation. The fifth is the bond of perpetual detestation. The sixth is the bond of inclination to do evil, and of difficulty to do good. It is therefore said that when the Lord remits the fault in contrition he frees  
“ from

“ from the bonds of captivity and servitude absolutely ;  
 “ but from the bond of eternal damnation, under this  
 “ condition, that he (the sinner) shall confess worthily,  
 “ if he have an opportunity ;—hence *the Master Hugo*  
 “ says, that both God and the priest bind, and both free ;  
 “ &c.” After a few words, he has the sentence as  
 quoted in Mr. Wharton.

I observe that this author quotes Cardinal Hugo ; then  
 he is not Hugo himself. But whoever he is, he only  
 means, that as perfect contrition always frees from the  
 bonds of captivity and servitude, the subsequent abso-  
 lution of the priest cannot loosen these bonds, since  
 they are loosened already. But he says that God only  
 frees from the bond of eternal damnation, under the  
 condition of a worthy confession afterwards, if there is  
 an opportunity of making it.

The sum of what the Council of Trent defined is ;  
 that penance is a sacrament : that confession is an essen-  
 tial part of it : and that the absolution of the priest is a  
*judicial sentence*, not a bare declaration of remission of  
 sin, as Luther dogmatized. Now I appeal to common  
 sense, if either Peter Lombard, or the supposed Cardi-  
 nal Hugo, deny any of these doctrines. They indeed,  
 as scholastic divines generally have done, went further  
 than the Council of Trent. They determined what  
 sort of contrition they thought necessary to obtain the  
 benefit of the sacrament ; and drew consequences from  
 their private opinions, which, though not directly con-  
 trary to that Council, are scarce reconcileable with its  
 doctrines. However they may be excused, because they  
 lived many years before the Church published these de-  
 crees. Let Mr. Wharton say as much, and in the same  
 sense ; and he will be a Catholic in this particular.

Be it remembered, that Mr. Wharton brought Car-  
 dinal Hugo as a witness of the sentiments of the divines  
 of those times : whereas this *unknown author* mentions  
 no divines at all, except *his Master Hugo*. This is ano-  
 ther specimen of his candour.

He



He proceeds, page 21. "You will not, I presume, question the authority of Fisher the famous Bishop of Rochester." Begging Mr. Wharton's pardon, we have a right to question the authority of the greatest man that ever lived, and even of an Angel from heaven, Galat. i. 8. if he should perchance hold opinions contrary to faith; and even though his faith should be that of the Catholic Church, we are not bound to admit his reasons as explications. These are matter of opinion, which can never be binding on Catholics. But—"Hear how faintly he discovers the revelation of purgatory in the scriptures: *As it is necessary, says he, that the doctrine of purgatory should be known by all, we must presume that it can be proved by scripture; hence it follows, according to this learned prelate, that unless the tenet be found in the bible, it is not necessary that it should be known to all men.*" I examined Fisher, Art. 18. adver. Luth. and could find no such words, nor any thing like the sense of them. This would indeed have been an error in faith, and consequently I could not think so learned and pious a Bishop would quit that faith for which he shed his blood; and join Luther against whom he writes, in the leading tenet of this reformer, *private judgment.*

Article 16, I find the contrary doctrine expressly delivered: "I think no one is so dull, as not to see that it was necessary some rule and scope should be delivered to Christians, to which they should conform themselves in all points of belief. For as disputes often arise about the scriptures, even among the most learned; it is necessary that another rule be fixed, *besides the scriptures*, and besides the interpretation of one or another, to which rule we ought to look up in all these controversies; and this rule is no other than *the consent and decree of the whole Church.*"

¶ This needs no comment; nor does it need any great stock of wisdom to pronounce on this *ungentlemanlike* way of arguing of Mr. Wharton.

He

He gathers, page 22, two things from the same author, and quotes him in a manner which demonstrates that he has not read him. The quotation is neither found altogether, nor in the same words. However as Bishop Fisher has the same thing in substance, I will not cavil with Mr. Wharton. He teaches then, that there is seldom any mention of purgatory in the ancient Greeks; that they do not believe purgatory to this day; and that this doctrine was not made known to the Church but by degrees. He gives a very singular reason for this his extraordinary opinion. He supposes that the fervor of the first Christians was so great as not to stand in need of purgatory; and therefore that this tenet was not inquired into till that fervor began to abate. This is not an error in faith, but a private opinion as to the method of explaining the tenets of the Church. However the learned Bishop is deceived as to this fact; for the Greeks assembled in the Council of Florence, Sess. 25. define: "That the souls of the saints  
 " in heaven have acquired a crown as perfect as their  
 " state of sou's can admit of; that the souls of sinners  
 " suffer in compleat misery; but that middle souls  
 " (those in a middle state) are in a place of torment;  
 " but whether this be fire, or darkness, or whatever else,  
 " we do not determine."

The Greeks differed in opinion from the Latins, who generally thought that this purgation was made by fire; which the Greeks did not. But as the manner of purifying was not essential to the tenet of purgatory, nor was it determined by the faith of either Church, they formed and signed a definition, that there is a place of purgation, in which the suffering souls are helped by the suffrages of the faithful.

This is all they jointly defined, and all we are bound to believe of this *extraordinary tenet*. The Greeks say, *ibid.* that they were not separated from the Latins on account of this article of their faith; and consequently the faith of the Greeks was the same, though their opinion was different as to the explication.

Mr.

Mr. Wharton demands, page 22, from what passage of the scriptures the doctrine of purgatory can be proved: "The books of the Maccabees were not acknowledged for canonical scripture by St. Hierom, Rufinus, Epiphanius, Athanasius, Gregory, and many other ancient and eminent fathers; and the texts usually acknowledged from other parts of the bible, have been all rejected so expressly by several of your own Doctors, that an impartial man may safely regard them as very doubtful sources of this extraordinary tenet."

Candour should have engaged Mr. Wharton to enquire why St. Hierom, &c. did not acknowledge the books of the Maccabees for canonical scriptures: and why the texts from other parts of the bible are rejected by our own Doctors. To decide on these points without a previous examine, and of consequence doubt, if we allow Mr. Wharton's rules of inquiry, is to pre-judge the cause on the authority of a few, against a torrent of others; or at best a torpid acquiescence to the opinions of men. Should I say that the epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews, and several other books admitted by Protestants, were not acknowledged for canonical scriptures by St. Hierom, &c. what can Mr. Wharton answer, which will not serve me? St. Hierom says expressly that the epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews was not acknowledged by the whole Latin Church. Comment. on the 8th chap. of Isaiah.

Mr. Wharton knows very well that some of the inspired books were written sooner than others: some communicated to more hands than others; and therefore they could not all be universally known and received as canonical at the same time. The Church only admitted those books into the canon, which were the undoubted productions of inspired penmen. But having examined the question, the epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews was found genuine, as were the other books of the Maccabees, Revelations, &c. and were all inserted in the canon of the scriptures. I could, if it were necessary, name very great authorities for the books of



of Maccabees, and among the rest, the Third Council of Carthage; but I need not.

For the proof of purgatory from the books of the Maccabees is beyond reply, though they should only have the bare authority of history? Certainly this proves that the Jews held praying for the dead as a pious and salutary custom: and as we do not find *in the scriptures*, that our divine legislator ever reprehended them, we may justly infer against Mr. Wharton, that he never did: which he most certainly would have done, had he disapproved of either the practice or the principle. This argument is urged with great force by Doctor Jeremy Taylor on the Proph. Book 1. Sect. 20. 11, 11. p. 345.

The other texts "*have been expressly rejected by our own Doctors.*" Several have, not because they did not think those texts expressed the doctrine of purgatory, in the revealed sense, but to avoid cavil; as they knew no text would satisfy *private judgment*; which could possibly be wrested to another meaning.

But there is one text, Matth. xii. v. 32. which was never rejected by any Catholic Doctor worth naming. Mr. Wharton knew this, and therefore though he has quoted most of the others, he has carefully omitted this. But then with what truth could he assert, *that all the others have been expressly rejected by our own Doctors.* Indeed the words of Christ need no comment: for when he says, that "whoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come:" the consequence is that some sins may be forgiven in the world to come, unless we suppose that Christ talked nonsense. But no sin will ever be forgiven to the damned, nor to the blessed in heaven: then there is a third place, and this we call purgatory.

Mr. Wharton, page 23, pleads an excuse for his incredulity, because several of our most celebrated divines have acknowledged that some important articles of our communion are not found in the bible, and therefore "Was it unreasonable to assert, that I could never discover

cover them there, since they escaped the notice of "such acute and interested inquirers." Every article of our faith is revealed, and therefore *important*. We all grant, (and Mr. Wharton shall soon be forced to allow it) that several of these articles are not in the bible. We shall not then blame Mr. Wharton, because he could not find them in it. We cannot conceive why he should seek in the bible for those tenets, which we allow are not to be found therein. However several of those he mentions are very clearly delivered in the bible, if it were to be interpreted, not by *private judgment*, but by *common sense*.

One of these important tenets is *the supremacy of the Roman Church*. This indeed is neither in the bible, nor in any Catholic profession of faith. The supremacy of the Pope in spirituals is indeed a point of our belief, and we think it is plainly delivered in the written word of God: but I never before heard of the supremacy of the Church. This is a *random shot*!!!

I shall here dismiss these old authors for a while, to consider a more important matter, than the private opinion of either *Peter Lombard* or *Aristotle*: the authority of the Church; on which point alone I will stake the issue of the contest.

Mr. Wharton, page 23, agrees that "the whole matter rests ultimately on this infallible authority. This being once admitted, all controversy must cease: but if it be rejected, then must the only rule of our faith be looked for in the bible." This is a just consequence: for if the authority of the Church be once admitted, then the last appeal is to her tribunal; her decrees are irrevocable. If it be rejected, then every private person has a right to misunderstand the scriptures as he pleases; and any paradox he chances to blunder upon becomes an article of his faith. Why did not Mr. Wharton follow his own rules of rational investigation in this main point? Why did he so hastily cast off this *dead weight of authority*, barely from his delicate and tender feelings for his Protestant brethren? This

is not an impartial and candid inquiry; it is *prejudging* the cause.

"Should it be said (page 24.) that reason tells me to submit to an infallible Church: my answer is that reason tells me also that such submission is weakness, unless this infallibility be demonstrated." Granted by every Roman Catholic. Why then did not Mr. Wharton examine the reasons on which this infallibility is grounded? What follows is not a rational investigation. It is no investigation at all. "Should you urge, that some texts in holy writ go to prove the infallibility of the Roman Catholic Church, may I not answer with confidence, that reason and experience tell me much more forcibly, that several articles are incredible and groundless, which rest solely on that infallibility? Does not reason, for instance, assure me with greater evidence, that the Almighty requires not our belief of a doctrine, which stands in direct contradiction to the *only means* he has allowed us of arriving at truth.—I mean our *senses* and *understanding*."

This investigation is backwards. Instead of inquiring on what this infallibility is grounded, he examines, *with great confidence*, the doctrines proposed by it: and because he finds the Catholic doctrine of the real presence contrary to his senses and his understanding, he dogmatically pronounces the authority of the Church to be contrary to reason. This is a new rule of faith. We have now no more need of the scriptures. *Our senses and our understanding are the only means of arriving at truth.* Revelation is impossible, or at least useless; for we can never arrive at any truth but by our *senses* and our *understanding*: and it is impossible for either to attain the knowledge of supernatural truths, if such there be. All this is deism in the strict sense of the word.

Voltaire, Hume, Rousseau never went further. Should Mr. Wharton urge "that miracles and prophecies go to prove the existence of revelation." Any one of these may answer with *confidence*, "that several arti-



"cles are incredible and groundless, which rest solely  
 " on revelation. That God cannot require our belief  
 " of a doctrine, which stands in direct contradiction to  
 " the only means he has allowed us of arriving at  
 " truth; our senses and our understanding." It would  
 be in vain for Mr. Wharton to urge the necessity of re-  
 velation. Let him remember his own words: *the only*  
*means of arriving at truth are our senses and our under-*  
*standing*: therefore revelation is not a means allowed  
 by providence of *arriving at truth!* ! !

" Do a few controverted facts (contested miracles or  
 " prophecies) make revelation as evident to reason, as  
 " it is plain to the most ordinary capacity, that three  
 " cannot be but one; that the eternal God cannot be  
 " born of a virgin, or die; that an infinitely good God  
 " cannot punish an innocent for the sin of his father,  
 " in which he had no share, &c. &c. &c. This to a  
 " Deist, has ever been the language of reason, which  
 " was never rejected with impunity, &c."

These are Mr. Wharton's own sentiments in the  
 mouth of a Deist reasoning against revelation. I have  
 only changed *controverted texts* for *controverted facts*;  
 and *infallibility* for *revelation*. The arguments are the  
 same on both sides. For as Mr. Wharton controverts  
 the texts of scripture, which go to prove infallibility;  
 so the Deists controvert the miracles and prophecies,  
 which prove the existence of revelation.

The only reason why Mr. Wharton rejects this au-  
 thority is, because some doctrines proposed by it are  
*contrary to our senses and our understanding*: and this is  
 the very ground-work of deism. They all to a man re-  
 ject revelation from the authority of their senses and un-  
 derstanding.

It is in vain to say, that the doctrines of revelation  
 are not *contrary to reason*, but only above our capacity:  
 whereas the doctrine proposed by church-authority,  
 with regard to the eucharist, is directly contrary to our  
 senses. For in the first place, if any revealed truth is  
 above our capacity: then our senses and our under-  
 standing

standing are not the only means of arriving at truth. Secondly, I appeal to common sense, if it be not as contrary to our senses and understanding, that *three should be but one*, as, that *a body should be in many places at once*. That *the Eternal God should be shut up in the womb of a virgin, be born, and die*; as that he *should be shut up in boxes, and be devoured corporally by vermin*. I hope some learned protestant will join me against Mr. Wharton. He is as great an enemy to the Church of England, as to the Catholic Church.

I beg leave to add, that it has always appeared to me as great a mystery, "That the body and blood of Christ" should be verily and indeed taken and received by "the faithful in the Lord's supper," which verily and indeed are not there, as the trinity or transubstantiation. Let Mr. Wharton remember, that if God speaks he must be heard; our senses and understanding must submit: and likewise if the Church is infallible, her definitions in points of faith must be revealed by God. Our senses and understanding are not the only test of truth, even in the common order of nature. Experience proves every day a thousand serious truths, which our senses or understanding could never attain. Let any man look into himself; he is a compleat mystery to both his senses and understanding. Every part of his body, every faculty of his mind, is a secret impervious to both. No one can comprehend how an indivisible intelligent being can be so closely linked to a mass of matter, which he calls his body, as to be mutually dependant on each other. How can this connection be cut off in an instant, by the thrust of a sword through the heart, or the entrance of a small piece of lead? How can a spirit act upon matter? How can it animate this lump of earth? How can the arm be moved? All these things are as mysterious to our senses and understandings, as the Jews question to our divine Redeemer, *How can this man give us his flesh to eat?* as Mr. Wharton's would be, *How can a body be in two places at once.*

Let no one then hold forth his senses and reason as the only means of arriving at truth. Our reason is not the measure of infinite wisdom. Even Lucifer with all his pride never arrogated so much to himself. The Devils believe and tremble.

I have thus far been chiefly intent on refuting Mr. Wharton's errors and reasoning; without seeking to establish the tenets he attacks, partly because I wished to avoid the endless task of controversy. For unless we reason with those who seek truth in simplicity of heart, it is disputing with a man who declares beforehand that he will not be convinced. But I had another intention in this, to reserve myself for this fundamental principle of revealed religion, the divine appointment of church authority to guide us in our researches after revealed tenets. On this must our religion be grounded, if God has given his sanction to it. By the decision of this question, the Catholic Church must stand immovable, amidst the rocks of persecuting power, and the cavils of aspiring reason, or the Christian religion must be subjected to the refinements of cunning men, the garrulity of dotards, the dreams of old women, the presumptuous conjectures of daring impudence, and finally the blasphemous doctrines of enthusiasts. For if private judgment be the way instituted by God to interpret the scriptures, all these have an equal right; and however they may contradict or condemn each other, they must all be allowed the full extent of gospel liberty: they must all be in the right way to heaven.

Before I enter upon this discussion, I must beg leave to premise some general principles, which must be allowed by every Christian. I suppose, as granted on all hands, that the mediator of the new covenant came down from heaven to publish his law, which he commanded to be observed as the only road to happiness, by all who could procure the knowledge of it. I shall not endeavour to prove this; as I think if any man denies it, he is no Christian.

I shall



I shall again suppose, with Mr. Wharton against himself, that this law contains some principles of belief impervious to the researches of our *senses and our understanding*; I shall specify some articles later. I say *some articles of belief*: at present I neither examine how many, nor what they are. If Mr. Wharton *consistently*, and *inconsistently* too, denies this, let him not make a farce of religion; let him boldly avow his real sentiments, and join his brethren of the deistical tribe. He disclaims *habitual hypocrisy*, page the 9th.

I will again suppose with and against Mr. Wharton, that no one can make an act of faith, upon any article of revelation, without a previous *rational conviction*; that such an article is really revealed. Without this conviction *it is not faith, it is credulity; it is weakness*; page 18. yet *ibid*, this is expressly prescribed to the unlettered multitude.

Hence I infer that God has provided some means or other, by which all Christians must acquire the knowledge of revealed truths, without danger of error, at least in those points which he commands to be believed. It is repugnant to all our ideas of a God, to suppose him so improvident, as to give us means whereby to know revealed truths, which means, however, lead us to errors contrary to revelation.

I shall again assert with Mr. Wharton, against Mr. Wharton, that there is but one method established by God, as a means to acquire this knowledge, in common to all Christians: not one for the learned, and another for the unlearned.

In the 18th and 19th pages, Mr. Wharton says, that those, "whom neither *education*, nor *abilities*, nor *leisure* qualify to enter upon such inquiries, must rely "principally on the authority of their teachers:" and page 23, he says, that whoever rejects church-authority, "must seek for the only rule of their faith in the bible." Let us have no quibble about words; this is the sense, if there is any sense in his expression.

To say that many Christians are incapable of making this examine, is only saying that God has provided means to acquire the knowledge of revealed truths, which are insufficient to the purpose. The unlearned who rely on *human authority (of their teachers) without weighing or understanding the doctrines which they inculcate*, are guilty of *weakness, of credulity*, page 18.

To render this still clearer, let us examine Mr. Wharton's quotation of the Bishop of Chester, page 19. "In matters for which he must rely on authority, let him trust those, who, by encouraging free inquiry, appear to love truth: rather than such, as, by requiring all their doctrines to be implicitly obeyed, seem conscious that they will not bear to be freely tried. But never let him prefer any authority to that, which is the highest authority, the written word of God."

According to this doctrine, an unlearned man may rely on the authority of his teachers, without any examine: and yet he must examine the written word of God, lest he should prefer any authority to it; for without examine how can he know whether his school-master, or minister, do not teach articles of faith contrary to the written word of God?

Another curiosity in this quotation is, that a person, who cannot in conscience *submit to any authority upon earth in the choice of his faith*, when he does, as he *safely may submit to authority*, he must always prefer the *authority* of those, who, in fact, and according to their own principles, have no *authority at all*; to those, who teach in the name of a church established by the authority of God, maintained and supported by the *authority* of her pastors for seventeen centuries. The good Bishop had certainly forgot himself when he wrote this. But truth will come out. He felt the impossibility of following the way of examine, and must say something to absolve the practice of the Church of England from contradiction. This he has happily effected, by falling into more glaring inconsistencies. To quit these absurdities of the Bishop and Mr. Wharton.

No man can make an act of faith upon any one article of his creed, without a rational conviction that such article is revealed: now the bare authority of a school-master or minister can never suffice for a rational conviction of the revelation of any article whatever. If he is consistent, he must say to his pupil: "I think such an article, the trinity for example, is revealed in the bible; but you must not take my word for it; I may err. I have no authority to controul your judgment, or require your assent. Many have thought, and still think otherwise. You must never prefer any authority to that of the scriptures; hence you must examine them yourself, and determine according to your own judgment."

In a word, a rational conviction can never be acquired from the authority of any man or set of men, who have no authority at all; but in the principles of private judgment, no man nor set of men has any authority, therefore no man living can ever acquire a rational conviction of the revelation of any one article from any authority upon earth: except his own private examine.

Be it then an established maxim of Mr Wharton, that no man living can ever have a rational conviction that any one article is revealed, but only by his own private examine of the scriptures; and therefore he can never make an act of faith upon any one article, till he has made this examine. This is certainly the belief of every *consistent* member of the Reformation.

These principles being supposed, and I hope granted, I shall proceed to examine whether private judgment or church authority have the best claim to divine institution.

If this question was rightly understood, it ought to start a little higher. After the proofs of revelation, the next inquiry should be, how must we find out what is, or is not revealed? This question precedes the supposition of the written word of God. If it is then determined that we are to seek the tenets of revelation from



from our own private judgment, we must find out the written word of God by the same means. No authority on earth has a right to controul the judgment of any one, in his choice of the scriptures, any more than in the revealed sense of them. Should any one think proper to reject any book or books of the bible, as apocryphal, or to add some others, as canonical, for example the 3d and 4th books of Esdras, he has the warrant of his own private judgment for so doing; acts consistent with his principles. No man, nor number of men can justly call him to account, or contest his canon, unless they can convince him of his error. Hence, no man living can have a rational conviction of the revelation of any one point of faith from the scriptures, without a previous conviction that the book, from whence he takes it, is really the written word of God, entire and not corrupted. If these fountains of revelation be not genuine, or be corrupted, he can have no security, that any article whatever, extracted from them, is really revealed. The book may be spurious, that text may be added, &c.

A person therefore, in the system of private judgment, to be consistent, must examine the book in his hands, compare it with those from which it is translated; then the originals themselves must be canvassed, to discover whether they really are the genuine productions of those inspired penmen whose names they bear. Any one would be sorry to find out, that an epistle, said to be inspired, should prove to be the work of some ancient Pope of Rome. For want of this examine Mr. Wharton himself mistakes the composition of an *unknown Arian heretic* for the work of St. John Chrysostom. He must also find out, that all the doctrines contained in the book are the original texts of the author. Without this he might mistake the opinion of Plato for the faith of St. Paul.

I think this previous examine of every book of the scriptures, and of every text in each book, so necessary, if private judgment is the rule of faith, that no man living

ing can otherwise have a rational security, that any book, or any text in the whole bible, is really the written word of God: and consequently, without this previous examine he never can have a rational conviction of the revelation of any tenet of faith. I presume it is not necessary to tell Mr. Wharton, that this examination is impossible, at least to nine-tenths of mankind. If then private judgment be established as the only rule of faith; it is impossible for the greater part of mankind ever to acquire the knowledge of any one tenet of the Christian religion. It would be a labour of years to the greatest heads and best hearts; if even those few could ever accomplish it. But the rest of mankind would sit down in despair, and throw off all thoughts of a religion wholly impervious to their greatest efforts and best endeavours.

It will be said that this is anticipating the question. It is making a doubt of what we all agree in. A man may safely build his faith on those books, which are universally esteemed canonical. The debate is therefore, whether the bible, admitted on both sides to be the word of God, is to be interpreted by private judgment, or by church authority.

This is indeed part of the debate; but I think common sense requires a discussion of the previous question. How do we know that this mutual agreement is founded on reason? If a private person may rely on authority for the written word of God, why not for the sense of it! If even universal consent about the meaning of any scriptural text cannot bind any man, unless his own judgment gives a sanction to it: how can any consent, however universal, be binding as to the inspired writings? Setting cavil aside, private judgment is or is not the last tribunal to which every man must appeal for his religion. If it is, then he has a right to reject any book or books of the bible as spurious; or to add any number of books, even the Alcoran to the canon, as his judgment directs. In either of these cases he decides according to his principles. No authority on earth has a right

right to controul his opinion, not even though he should reject the whole bible. But if this private judgment is not the last tribunal; let us then set it aside, and return to that authority, which has always defined and determined the canon of the scriptures, as well as the sense of the inspired writings.

But what sort of authority, in any case, is sufficient to give an illiterate person a rational security that his bible is really the written word of God? For should any one of the fautors of private judgment, *inconsistently* recur to authority for this security, I hope he will not be still more inconsistent, by giving credit to his bible, barely on the authority of his *grand-mother*, or *parish-clerk*, who teaches the primmer. If only one epistle should be spurious, he might mistake the dreams of an heathen philosopher for the doctrine of revelation. If any text be wanting, he may possibly lose a fundamental article: if any be added he may believe a fundamental error.

What authority on earth can furnish a rational security on all these points? In the principles of private judgment no authority on earth can be binding in matters of religion. I must once more repeat, that no man can have any security from an authority, which according to his leading principle, has no claim to his assent: and this is certainly the case of every one who follows private judgment, if he is *consistent* with himself.

It is folly to alledge human tradition; such as has communicated to us the writings of the ancients. For Catholics call this divine tradition, because it communicates to us the objects or sources of our faith. If this be admitted, we have done with the reformation. What signifies the term? We shall agree in fact. More of this later.

Whatever the case be, if any authority is sufficient to ascertain the revelation of the bible, surely it must be that, which is the greatest visible authority in the world; or whose consent is the most universally spread through every nation; then I hope, what I think is known to every

one,



one, that the consent of the Catholic Church respecting the canon of the scriptures is more universally diffused through the known world, than that of any other society whatever; and consequently only the Catholic canon can be consistently admitted, if authority is to decide.

The canon of the Catholic Church should not be rejected without examining her reasons: the canon of no other society should be admitted without weighing the grounds of the difference. Then my argument returns in full force. This examination must be made by every man's private judgment, before he can have a rational conviction of the revelation of any one text in the bible: whoever receives any canon on any other authority than that of the Catholic Church, *without weighing or understanding* the reasons, his belief is not *faith*, it is *credulity*; it is *weakness*. I hope I have proved this examine to be impossible to the far greatest part of mankind.

However, let us suppose, though it is manifestly inconsistent with the doctrine of private judgment, that the scriptures are admitted as canonical on the authority of men; there remains yet a difficulty much beyond the reach of the vulgar, not to mention even the learned themselves.

It is still impossible for a man to make an act of faith of any revealed point, from the scriptures, unless he has a rational conviction that he understands it in that sense in which it was delivered by the spirit of God. Without this his faith would be *credulity and weakness*. But how is this conviction to be acquired? Every one knows that a proposition, however plain and intelligible it appears, may have a very different sense, from the various ways of writing it. A man may understand a proposition in the natural sense, which the Holy Ghost delivered in the moral or figurative. This is the dispute between Protestants and Catholics concerning the words of Christ, *This is my body*. He might possibly take a sentence as an assertion, which was only meant as an exclamation, or interrogation. This is the con-

test

rest between the Socinians and the Catholics about St. Thomas's words, *My Lord, and my God*. The sentence is entirely altered by the different way of placing the stops or pauses.

Who in his senses can suppose all these niceties to be within the sphere of vulgar capacities? The generality of Christians would deceive themselves, in forming the interpretations of the various texts of scripture: they would often take the words as they stand, without attention to some essential reference to other places; or at best would remain in dubious anxiety, without any possibility of a rational conviction, that they have penetrated the real sense of the inspired penman.

But fact itself proves this more clearly than any argument can make it. Whence these eternal jars and contradictions among the many systems of religion invented by private judgment? The *Reformation* has been so *reformed*, by its own rule of faith, that there is scarce any one sect at present, which either follows its leaders, Luther, Calvin, &c. or even knows what they taught. I may add, there are scarce two of these sects which entirely agree in their chief tenets of faith. There are not more quibbles at the bar about the sense of the law, than among religionists concerning the sense of the bible: and all have an equal claim to private judgment; they cannot all be in the right; some of them most certainly contradict revelation. Indeed the wisdom of men has provided an authority to determine the debates in the law: while the eternal wisdom of God is supposed to leave the doctrines of his revealed religion to the discussion and litigation of head-strong reasoners; the nonsense of old women and the dreams of enthusiasts without any authority to decide the controversy!

This evidently shews that the scriptures are susceptible of different interpretations. How then can any man of sense pretend to a rational conviction, that his alone is the revealed sense of the bible? Many think otherwise, perhaps more learned than himself. They may have given themselves more trouble; or have been

more

more happy in their researches. But what are we to do with nine-tenths of mankind, wholly unable to make this examine? Mr. Wharton grants that there are many *whom* "neither education, nor abilities, nor leisure" qualify to enter upon these inquiries." These therefore can never have a rational conviction from an examine, which is above their capacity. If they trust to the authority of their teachers, they abandon the leading principle of the reformation, *private judgment*. Their belief is *credulity and weakness*. Nay more they submit to the authority of a private national church, of England, Scotland, Geneva, &c. in contradiction to the greatest authority upon earth, that of the Catholic Church dispersed through the world, without examining the pretensions of either, any further than they are led by their teachers. Thus in fact the bare authority of a private teacher is the only motive on which the faith of most members of the Reformation ultimately relies. It is *credulity and weakness* in the extreme, to rely solely on the authority of a man, who has no authority at all. But it is stupidity in the strict sense of the word, to rely on his authority in preference to that of the whole Catholic world.

It has always been a matter of astonishment to me, how any one can hold forth the clearness of the scriptures as a reason to permit every silly old woman, or illiterate labourer to decide dogmatically, without appeal from their judgment, on points of faith or precepts of morality. They would certainly be thought incapable of judging for themselves, in other matters of less moment. It seems evident that these decisions of faith are not so easy to be made, St. Peter, speaking of St. Paul's writings, says: "In which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. 2d Ep. c. iii. 16."

I know well the refuge of Mr. Wharton. He feels the impossibility of composing the contradictions and quarrels of the various sects of the Reformation. To



damn those who differ in opinion, would be adopting that uncharitable and unpopular tenet, which he imposes on Catholics. Every one moreover has an equal claim to support his sentiments from the unalienable right of *private judgment*; of *reason and conscience*. He knows however that there is but *one Church* instituted by Christ as the only way to happiness. The difficulty then is to bring these absurd and jarring systems to agreement: to make them all members of this same church, in spite of their mutual anathemas. This Mr. Wharton happily effects, page 19, "In the latter (new testament) it was easy to discover the *great fundamental and necessary* doctrines of the Christian dispensation." Page 37. "I look forward with rapture to that auspicious day, when Protestants opening their eyes, upon their mutual agreement in all the essentials of belief, will forget past animosities, and cease to regard each other as of different communions." Thus all those who follow *private judgment, reason and conscience*, however they may curse and damn each other, are of the same way of thinking as to *essentials*: nay I suppose even the Catholics may possibly be favoured with his indulgence in this particular. The whole Christian world then wants nothing more to belong to the same church, but that all sects should cease to regard each other as of different communions.

But till they cease to regard each other as of different communions, they cannot be accounted members of the same church. All the members of any church are in communion with each other: while there is no connection or communication in the same faith or sacraments, between the different branches of Protestants, they are no more of the same communion than Jews and Mahometans: and consequently those who are not in that communion, which was instituted by Christ, are not in the way to happiness.

Yet suppose this ingenious device of Mr. Wharton admitted, there is an absurdity of the greatest consequence attached to it. Whoever pretends to the name of

of Christian, is by this rule in the way to salvation; or this doctrine of fundamentals destroys itself. Mr. Wharton's *fundamental articles* may be denied by some members of the Reformation; several are denied by many; now those persons, who reject any fundamental article, are either in the way to salvation; and then not even fundamentals are necessary; or by rejecting a fundamental article of religion, they are not in the road to heaven, and in this case, what becomes of private judgment, if a man may be damned for following it? But to come more home to the question.

For this system, two things must be proved from scripture: the first, that *only fundamentals* are necessary to be believed. The second, that they be determined. Let me ask in Mr. Wharton's own words, *Is this doctrine of fundamentals clearly and evidently delivered in any passage of the bible?* Mr. Wharton rejects transubstantiation, because *our own doctors* could not find this article *clearly and evidently* express'd in the bible. His question however is of no consequence against us; because we admit tradition, where our creed may be *evidently delivered*, though the bible should not mention one half of it. But Mr. Wharton admits no rule of faith but the *dead letter* of the written word of God. Let him then shew us in what passage of the bible this doctrine of fundamentals is evidently delivered. If he cannot, the principle must be abandoned.

To prove that only *fundamentals* are necessary, he should produce some text, not *controverted*, but *plain and evident*, which either points out some articles, as the only essential truths to be received; or that some revealed truths may be rejected with impunity; but there is no such text in the bible: there are many to the contrary. In fact, common sense is quite sufficient to discover the folly and extravagance of this supposition. If this be admitted, whatever error in faith or morals be adopted, provided *fundamentals* be safe, it is still the right way to happiness. Let a man misunderstand the plainest text in the bible, wherein God has manifested his divine

will, or some supernatural truth, if it is not a fundamental article, he is still in the right road, and a member of the Church of Christ. Thus the Almighty has published a law, which he has commanded to be observed under pain of his wrath; and yet he will not be *angry* with those, who reject every single tenet of revelation, or precept of morality contained in this law, provided they observe a few grand points, which are called essentials; and for no other reason, that I could ever discover, but because the others may be rejected with impunity, as fancy or passion directs. Can we suppose infinite wisdom so inconsistent as not to exact our belief and obedience in every thing, which he has manifested to us. Whatever the Eternal God has revealed or commanded is certainly of some consequence. He never would publish a law perfectly useless in the far greater part of its doctrines: which would certainly be the case, if this absurd system was adopted.

Should it be said, as I suppose it will, that no one can be allowed to reject any article of revelation, although it should not be a fundamental tenet, if he has a sufficient conviction that it is delivered in the bible, because this would constitute heresy.

Then let Mr. Wharton say with Catholics, that every voluntary error, in matters of faith, is heresy, and excludes from the kingdom of heaven. That invincible ignorance alone can plead an excuse for any error in faith: and consequently that, nothing can excuse him, who rejects any revealed truth, whatever it be, through passion or prejudice, which are in his power, and therefore it is his duty to remove. If he means only this, why does not he say it? But if he means any thing else, I wish for a better explication.

I beg leave to remark, that no man can be so stupid, as to reject what he really thinks is revealed by God. Any one may pretend outwardly that he does not believe an article of faith; but I defy a man in his senses to reject in his heart, what he really thinks has the veracity of God for its sanction. Hence either a man is  
guilty



guilty of heresy, whenever his belief is contrary to any revealed tenet, (unless invincible ignorance plead an excuse) and then the doctrine of fundamentals vanishes as smoke; or it will be impossible to prove that any heresy ever existed. Did not the Arians, Pelagians, Manicheans, &c. believe that their faith was delivered in the bible; as interpreted by their private judgment? Were they not heretics?

But this doctrine of fundamentals would serve no purpose, unless they were determined. What will it avail a man to know that there are such tenets in the bible, unless he can find out which they are? For want of this knowledge he might reject a fundamental article, or embrace a fundamental error. *But are these fundamental articles clearly and evidently delivered in any passage of the bible?* Let Mr. Wharton answer his own question. Let him point out, which are those *essentials of belief*, without which *no salvation can be had*. But what right has Mr. Wharton or any man living to determine these articles, from *private judgment*? By the same rule another might proscribe them as *fundamental errors*. Mr. Wharton has no authority to erect a standard of orthodoxy. Let him shew his warrant from *clear and uncontroverted texts* of the bible: otherwise his opinions are groundless, even in his own principles.

Nevertheless he has done this page 35: "The universal Christian Catholic faith is delivered compendiously in the Apostles creed. Whoever subscribes to it in its full extent, must be a member of the Catholic Church." Then whoever does not subscribe to it in its full extent is not a member of the Catholic Church. These articles of the Apostles creed are Mr. Wharton's *fundamentals*. Whoever rejects any one of them is not in the way to salvation; however he may interpret the scriptures by *private judgment*, notwithstanding his appeal to *reason and conscience*. Let Mr. Wharton look to the consequence. I believe there is not one single article of the creed, which has not been rejected by some ancient or modern religionist: and all of them

E. 3. have.

have pleaded *private judgment, reason and conscience*, as every one must do, who casts off the *dead weight of authority*.

The Arians and Socinians reject the first, second and eight articles. Whoever does not believe in God the Father, such as faith teaches him to be; and in Jesus Christ his only Son consubstantial to the Father, and in the Holy Ghost co-equal to both, he does not subscribe to the articles in their full extent, as they should really be understood. 1 John ii. 23. "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." These are fundamental articles. Whoever does not subscribe to them in their full extent, is out of the Church of Christ, and strays widely from the only road to happiness: nor will it avail him to plead *reason and conscience*, or the interpretation of private judgment.

The Nestorians denied the unity of person in our Redeemer, and the Eutychians the distinction of natures after the union; and consequently, they struck out of the creed all the articles, which regard the incarnation and redemption accomplished by a God-man; or at least did not subscribe to them in their full extent. Many among our polite and popular brethren of the Reformation cannot subscribe to the last article of the creed in its full extent: *that the wicked shall live forever in the torments of hell*. Even Mr. Wharton himself does not subscribe to the 9th and 10th articles, as they were always understood, by a very great majority of Christians, in all nations and ages. I do not mean, that these mentioned religionists did not say the creed; but they did not, they as yet do not subscribe to it, in its full extent: and therefore they all erred in *fundamentals*; were not members of the Catholic Church, nor consequently in the way to salvation. Yet they all followed scripture as interpreted by private judgment; and this is Mr. Wharton's religion: it is then error, it is heresy in fundamentals.

In a word, either the bible interpreted by private judgment, is the religion of Christ; and then whoever follows

follow their private interpretations of the bible are true members of the Catholic Church, in the way to salvation, whatever absurdities they admit: though they should reject every fundamental article of the Christian religion: or, we must adopt some better plan, which is a more secure road to unity in faith and morals.

I should never finish, were I to point out all the inconsistencies of this absurd doctrine of fundamentals, to return to the argument: there is not one text in the bible, which insinuates that the articles called *not fundamentals* may be rejected with impunity: nor is there a single text, which determines those called fundamentals. This doctrine is therefore new and unwarrantable. Hence to shew the force of my argument in one point of view.

It is impossible to make an act of faith of any one article, *even of the creed*, without a previous rational conviction that such an article is revealed; but this conviction can never be had from *private judgment*; it cannot therefore be a sufficient reason to ground our faith upon.

There is yet another dreadful inconvenience, which is a direct consequence of this leading principle. Supposing the possibility of a rational conviction arising from private judgment; it is evidently a task of such labour and study, as must require years of unbiassed inquiry before it can be accomplished. To follow Mr. Wharton's precepts, whoever proposes to acquire conviction, must begin by an universal doubt. He must examine each book in the bible, then every text in those books, before he can have a rational conviction of any one article of his creed. Supposing this possible, it is evident that this discussion cannot be made in a short time. Reason is not ripe for such a work at the time when the principles of faith and morality are inculcated into the minds of youth. Set any one of 16 on the study of the Civil Law, he will make but little progress, if left to the penetration of his own judgment; and yet I think the principles of law are more adapted to his capacity,



capacity, than the supernatural tenets of revealed religion. Let us then suppose that the best understanding and indefatigable application may bring him through this laborious task at the age of 20. Till that time he can make no act of faith, not even in fundamentals. This given age must evidently be restrained to the greatest capacities. More time must be allowed to others, according to their faculties and leisure. All these are out of the way to salvation. Until this examine is made they are not members of any Church. They are not *orthodox believers*. They are not *believers at all*.

I think this argument alone is sufficient to drive any serious person to despair.

These reasons are drawn from the nature of private examine: I shall submit to the attention of the reader another from fact. Mr. Wharton's religion is that of the bible. His religion contains principles of faith and precepts of morality. These principles and precepts must then be found in the bible, not in *obscure and controverted texts*, but *clearly and evidently* therein delivered. Where then is the doctrine of private examine delivered in the bible? I have already shewn that the texts he has brought for that purpose are not only controverted, but even do not hint at this doctrine. Where is the absurd tenet of fundamentals *clearly and evidently* delivered in the bible? Where does the bible declare that only a bishop can ordain, only a priest can consecrate? Or, where does the bible declare the contrary? Where does Mr. Wharton find in the bible that a layman, an heretic, an infidel *can*, or *cannot* baptize? Where is the *lawfulness* or *illegality* of infant baptism delivered in the bible? I cannot admit of *controverted texts*: are these tenets *clearly and evidently* delivered in *any passage of the bible*? Once more, let Mr. Wharton answer his own question *I fear this is a fact to which he never attended*. Where is the *precise number of two sacraments expressed in the bible*? Where is the 5th article of his creed *evidently* delivered in the bible?

Mr.

Mr. Wharton may perhaps say, that most of these tenets are matter of opinion: "among none of the *principal* branches of the Reformation are they obtruded "as articles of faith:" then they are obtruded as articles of faith among some of the inferior reformed churches; what is to become of *them*? Are they in the *church of Christ*? But I must inform Mr. Wharton, that they are *articles of faith*, in one sense or another, among all the *separated* branches of the Reformation.

Every point of belief, which is communicated to us by revelation only, is certainly an article of faith: *we believe it because God has revealed it.* But how can any one know the articles above unless God has revealed them? How can he know that the Almighty will accept of the baptism of a child, or that he will not accept it? How can he know that this sacrament *can be*, or *cannot be* validly administered by an heretic or infidel? These are surely matters of consequence, in either the affirmative or negative, in every religious system: and on these depends the salvation of millions: they can never be determined but by revelation; therefore they are tenets of revelation and articles of faith. They are nowhere to be found in the bible; therefore it is not the only rule of faith.

Thus we hear the bible held forth as the only guide to revealed truths. Nothing is to be admitted but what is clearly and evidently delivered in it: and yet these same persons are forced to admit many things which the bible makes no mention of. Mr. Wharton *has thrown away much ingenuity in refuting tenets to which we lay no claim*; or in imposing others upon us which we deny. But he has by the same arguments proved himself inconsistent.

I shall only take notice of two precepts of morality. When the Omnipotent Creator had finished his six days work, he blessed the seventh day and commanded it to be kept holy. Now that day was Saturday. We do not find in scripture that he ever changed the obligation to Sunday. Then according to Mr. Wharton, the command of sanctifying the seventh day remains still  
fixt

fixt to Saturday. How can he discharge this duty by sanctifying the Sunday? What warrant has he from scripture to invert the order of a divine precept?

In the New Testament, Acts xv. we find a precept of the Apostles, given by the direction of the Holy Ghost, to abstain from blood, and the flesh of suffocated animals. This precept is no where recalled in the New Testament; and therefore is still in force: and yet I know of no Christians who observe it. The Jews only follow scripture in these points. Protestants as well as Catholics adhere to tradition.

These arguments of fact have often been urged, but were never answered. How can persons, who admit no rule of faith or morality but the written word of God, subscribe to the tenets and practices above mentioned, where scripture is either silent, or plainly contradicts their principles.

I think it is time to form a contrast between this absurd and implicating system of private judgment and church authority. To explain the latter is to prove it of divine institution. I only desire candour and common sense: and flatter myself that the most ordinary capacity will be a compleat judge of the merits of the cause.

The gospel law is, as has been said, a law of faith, and of morals. The first teaches us what to believe of God, his perfections and attributes; to know our own miserable situation, to which we are reduced by sin: and the means of restoring us to our former dignity and importance, by regaining the favour and friendship of our incensed Creator. The second teaches us what to practise in order to gain heaven. The belief of revealed truths is equally exacted by this law, as obedience to precepts of morality; and as nothing can excuse a breach of a moral precept except invincible ignorance; so nothing less can exculpate a false belief. It is then clear that this law, consisting in principles of faith and moral precepts, was given by God to be observed inviolably, *and invariably the same*, to the end of time, as  
the



the only road to happiness. Whoever then refuses to submit to this law, or is ignorant of it, *by his own fault*, cannot hope to be excused by the all-scrutinizing justice of God.

Can any one in his senses suppose that infinite wisdom should institute a law of this consequence, and not constitute some persons as guardians to watch the observance of it! Human legislators always appoint magistrates to determine the sense of the law, in case of any dispute; otherwise we should have no end of debates. God himself appointed the priests, in the Jewish dispensation, to decide on all debates about the law of Moses: and decreed that every one should be put to death who should refuse to submit to their judgment, Deut. xvii. Can we then suppose that Jesus Christ has commanded his law to be observed to the end of the world, and has not appointed persons to watch the designs of intruders and invaders, as well as enforce the observance thereof? In this case the wicked and ignorant might lop off his divine ordinances, and substitute their own fictions as the commands of God. They might pervert the sense of the plainest principles, and disfigure it so as not to be known for his own. If then God has not appointed some persons to guard against encroachments of this nature; he has not provided sufficient means to transmit his law to the end of the world. It had been more consistent not to publish a law, than to exact the observance of it, and not provide for its preservation.

But God does not act thus repugnant to the rules of common prudence. He has placed in his Church "first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, &c." 1 Cor. xii. 28. And again, Ephes. iv. 11. "For he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." There are then in the Church of God *pastors and teachers*, who act as his vicegerents, under the sanction of his authority; their  
power

power is from him; they teach in his name. V. 14.  
 " That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to  
 " and fro, and carried about with every wind of doc-  
 " trine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness  
 " whereby they lie in wait to deceive." The reason  
 then is the preservation of unity among the faithful.  
 For this the bishops and pastors are constituted by the  
*Holy Ghost to govern the Church of God, Acts xx.* whose  
 voice we are bound to hear, to whose commands we  
 must submit. " Obey them that have the rule over  
 " you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your  
 " souls, as they that must give account: that they may  
 " do it with joy, and not with grief: Heb. xiii. 17."

The authority of pastors instituted by God is there-  
 fore sacred, and binds us to obedience: then their de-  
 cisions must be undoubted; the intention of their ap-  
 pointment is the conservation of the law of Christ, to  
 preserve peace and unity in their flock, and to guard  
 against the deceits of innovators. How would these  
 ends be answered, if every private person had a right to  
 interpret this law according to his own fancy? If the  
 pastors had no authority to controul the ravings of  
*private judgment?* Many in this case would believe er-  
 ror, *be carried away with every wind of doctrine.* No  
 unity in faith, no stability would ever subsist. The pa-  
 stors themselves might be *carried about with the same*  
*winds*; dissension must ensue; and if no tribunal were  
 erected to fix the standard, it would be impossible to  
 discern the doctrines of Christ himself, from the deceits  
 of crafty men; and by degrees the law would be lost in  
 the confusion.

Let us now examine fact: Was it by authority, or  
 private examine, that the Church was first planted, and  
 the faithful directed? Did SS. Peter, Paul, John, Jude,  
 &c. preach, or write first? Did they refer to scripture  
 to refute the false teachers they complain of, or to the  
 doctrines they had preached? When the Apostles first  
 opened their mission on the feast of Pentecost, accord-  
 ing to Mr. Wharton's doctrine of private judgment,  
 they

they should have written the gospels and epistles, and delivered these into the hands of the faithful, to be examined and scrutinized by every one; this they did not do; but having confirmed their authority by many miracles, and the application of prophecies made under the dispensation of the Jewish law; they then taught the faithful the law of Christ by word of mouth. Had the Jews and Gentiles followed Mr. Wharton's method of examining the doctrines taught by the disciples of Jesus Christ, the former would have been scandalized at the supposition of a Messiah made obedient unto the death of the cross; and the latter would have laughed at a Man-God, omnipotent in heaven, and bleeding, suffering, dying on earth. This doctrine was indeed reprobated by all those who were too high-minded to captivate their understanding under a decent submission to the authority of faith. "We preach Jesus Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, 1 Cor. i. 23." They might have told St. Paul and the other preachers of these *extraordinary tenets*: "Does not reason assure me with much greater evidence, that the Almighty requires not our belief of a doctrine, which stands in direct contradiction to the only means he has allowed us of arriving at truth our *senses* and our *understanding*?"

The Apostles preached and taught, by virtue of authority from on high, and commissioned bishops and pastors to teach, order and regulate, whatever they should deem necessary for the sanctification of the faithful. The *Apostolic mission* ceased with their persons; but the regular and ordinary mission of their successors was to continue to the end of the world; and their authority is equally from God. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God." Acts xx. v. 28. *Protestant translation.*

The Apostles therefore preached the gospel without scripture; their successors governed the Church of God by authority..



Many of the canonical books were unknown for years; some were not acknowledged even in the time of St. Hierom. Comment. in c. viii. Isa. &c. I do not mean to enter upon a critical dissertation of the precise time in which each of these books was received by the Church as canonical. It suffices for my purpose, that many of them were not universally known and received in the beginning of the Church. Certainly until the canon of the scriptures was formed and received, the faithful were governed by authority, not by private examine. Why then should the change take place? By what warrant? Did the bishops give up that power which they had received as successors of the Apostles? Or did the illiterate multitude encroach on the authority of their superiors constituted and appointed by the Spirit of God? Let it be ever remembered, that the scriptures every where prescribe an unlimited submission to the rulers and teachers of the Church. Be it also remembered, that the Church has always proceeded by *authority*, in *instructing* the flock of Christ; but she never desired her members to seek their faith in the bible, by private examine. Even every branch of the Reformation, forgetting this their leading principle, or rather *inconsistently* laying it aside, as insufficient and useless, *instruct youth* in the tenets of faith and morals, by *the way of authority*.

Much more might be said on this head, but I think I have sufficiently proved two capital points; first, that the Church was planted and governed in the first ages of Christianity by the *authority* of her pastors, not by *private judgment*: 2dly, That this authority of pastors was appointed by God to direct the faithful. Then I hope it will be granted, that it is unlawful to resist this authority, and consequently it must be infallible, in those matters which are necessary to salvation; for otherwise it would be insufficient to the main purpose of its institution. Let us now examine the matter a little closer.

The existence of revelation in any point of faith or morality is a question *of fact*. When we inquire if *such a doctrine* is contained in the bible, we only mean in other words to ask this question; *Has Almighty God revealed that doctrine?* the same as we ask, whether Cæsar led the Roman army into Britain?

Facts in the common order of nature can only be known by the senses of those, who are witnesses to them; and by hearsay from the witnesses to the absent. It was by this that St. Luke wrote his gospel, Luke c. i. v. 1, 2.

The certainty of this hearsay, or of the testimony of witnesses, depends on their character and the circumstances. When few witnesses assert a fact, which is otherwise a matter of so little consequence as not to interest the inquiry of the absent, then it relies solely on the credit of the witnesses, and will rarely arise to any degree of certitude. But when a public fact is told as seen by numbers, of such characters as exclude the appearance of deceit, then it acquires a degree of credibility, which it would be madness to contradict: but if the fact be otherwise of such material consequence, as to interest equally the absent and the witnesses, then it must either be true, or we must suppose all who receive it, whether present or absent, to be both fools and knaves.

Facts of a supernatural order, as miracles in confirmation of a revealed doctrine, can only be ascertained by the senses of the witnesses. That Christ cured the lame and the blind, raised the dead, &c. could only be supposed true, because the Apostles, Jews, &c. saw such facts performed. That the Apostles had no wish to deceive in supporting these facts, we know from their characters, which breathe throughout candor and simplicity. That they could never have imposed these facts on the world, if false, however they might wish to do it, is evident from the circumstances.

The facts are of a public nature, and consequently might easily be scrutinized: the religion evidently estab-

blished on them, is of consequence, and universal concern; they were then examined. The Jews were interested against that religion; and therefore would have destroyed its foundation, by disproving the miracles of our Lord, had there been a possibility of calling them in question. These facts then are beyond a doubt.

When the Apostles were sent to preach the gospel to the uttermost boundaries of the earth, they were endowed with the gift of miracles, in order to speak conviction to the minds of those distant nations, who perhaps had heard nothing of the transactions in Judea. But these miraculous powers only served to establish their apostolic authority; and disposed their disciples to receive whatever doctrines they preached. These doctrines could only be received as coming from the Apostles, by the testimony of the senses of those, who were witnesses to their being delivered. That the Apostles taught *such a doctrine*, is therefore matter of fact, which could only be known to those present, by their eyes and ears; and to the absent, whether as to time or place, by the common rules; the authority of the witnesses, and the circumstances.

I beg leave then to suppose as a principle, that we, at this distance of time, can only know, that the Apostles taught *such a doctrine*, for example the *trinity*, from the concurrent testimony of *ages and nations*.

This, I have said, is *a fact*: and therefore can only be known, by those means which must ascertain every other fact, the *testimony of men*.

It is uncandid and unchristian to examine the doctrines in themselves, to discover whether they are, or are not revealed. *Reason and understanding*, in comparing the tenets with our imperfect knowledge, can never answer this question, is *such a doctrine revealed by God?* unless Mr. Wharton will assert, that he *cannot* reveal, what we *cannot* comprehend. He might as well say that Sampson did not set fire to the corn, by the means of three hundred foxes; or did not carry away the gates of Gaza; because the first seems ridiculous, and "his  
" reason



" reason and experience tell him much more forcibly, " that the latter is incredible and groundless," because he is not strong enough to do the same.

All questions therefore about the existence of revelation, must be reserved to their proper tribunal, the concurrent testimony of witnesses, for the times in which such doctrines are delivered, and the joint authority of succeeding ages, who delivered to us, what they had received from their predecessors.

This testimony of men, handing facts down to posterity, is called *Tradition*. The certainty of tradition depends on the rules already explained.

When a fact of a private nature, no ways interesting, is communicated to only a few persons or families, the credibility of such a fact depends entirely on the characters of those who have handed it down to posterity.

It is very evident that the credibility of any fact increases in proportion to the number of persons to whom it was known in its origin, and by whom it is transmitted. It is less probable that a great number should conspire in deceiving themselves, than if they were only a few. But when any fact is of a public nature, of great consequence, and communicated to numbers of different nations, then the certainty of it is beyond the possibility of a doubt. It is manifestly impossible that a great number of different ages, characters, and of different countries, who perhaps have little or no communication with each other, should conspire in admitting a fact of this nature and consequence, delivered by their fathers, if such fact be not true: and equally impossible for such a number to hand down to posterity a public fact of any consequence as received by tradition, if they have not received it from their ancestors. On these rules the certainty of history depends.

To set this in a clearer light; let us examine a fact. For example, that *Cæsar*, after his victory over *Pompey*, reigned Dictator in Rome. This fact was publicly known to thousands, by the joint testimony of their senses; was soon spread abroad as a truth of which no one

doubted; was told to the succeeding generation in every kingdom throughout the known world; and finally it has been handed down to us in the same manner; and we at this day can no more doubt of it, than if we had seen Cæsar preside in the Senate. The same may be said of every fact of any moment and of public notoriety.

The infallibility of this tradition in public facts depends chiefly on the number of persons to whom it is communicated. For although a few persons may be actuated by interest or passion to propagate a falsehood; it is impossible for human nature in thousands to be so depraved as to wish to impose a known falsehood on the rest of mankind: but it is still more impossible for the rest of mankind to receive from them a supposed fact of this nature. As it is a public and interesting fact, they must be acquainted with the truth or falsity thereof.

The supposition of great numbers wishing to impose on the rest of mankind what they know to be false, argues a degree of depravity, which I think no man will imagine in many persons of different characters and nations: but to suppose the rest of the world so credulous as to receive from them what they must know to be false, is stupidity in the extreme, which I hope is repugnant to human nature at large.

The certainty of this tradition is evidently greater in religious truths, than in any others: because they are more interesting than other facts, of however universal import: sanctity in this life, and happiness hereafter depend upon them. For this reason they are of infinite consequence to all; all are equally concerned in them; and of consequence the learned in every country, in every age, must give them a severe scrutiny. They are communicated to more persons than any other facts: thus they are more universal, and of more consequence than any facts in the order of nature, and therefore the authority of tradition on this head is more secure, more infallible than in any other case.

I shall now beg leave to remark, that the tenets of Christianity, which were every where preached as articles of faith, were in their origin facts of public and universal notoriety. That the doctrine of the *incarnation*, for example, was preached by the Apostles in Jerusalem, in Ephesus, in Rome, &c. was a fact of which any one of the meanest capacity might be informed. Had any one asked the question, *Was the doctrine of the incarnation preached at Ephesus?* the answer must have been, that it certainly was; that thousands had heard it; that of course it was publicly allowed to be the doctrine of St. Paul. The same may be said of every other tenet of faith, and in every place, where the faith of Christ was preached.

The truths of Christianity were therefore facts of public notoriety in their origin, and were communicated to all nations. They could not then have been *first received*, nor afterwards transmitted to posterity, if false. Thus tradition is vindicated from every possibility of error in these articles. It would remain a sure guide to revealed tenets, if we had never known the scriptures. I beg leave therefore to call this *divine tradition*. Let it not be a bugbear to scare the ignorant. What signifies the word, if we agree in fact? It is called divine tradition only because it communicates to us the knowledge of *divine truths*. In other respects it is evidently the same as every tradition, by which past facts are made known to us. The concurrent testimony of men is the motive; the universality of this consent gives it immense weight; and the consequence of the truths handed down to us, prove that they could never have found acceptance, had they not been examined and found genuine.

One thing gives an additional force to the authority of tradition. *No new revelation can be admitted*; and therefore whatever was an article of faith, must be so now: and whatever we receive from universal tradition, from the reasons just now assigned, must of consequence come from the Apostles,

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This leading principle of the Catholic Church makes it impossible for any new tenet to be admitted as an article of faith, or an old one to be rejected.

At whatever time we suppose a new tenet to be introduced, and added to the public creed of the Church, any one of a tolerable capacity and information must have known that the article proposed was not believed as faith till then: it was then a fact of public notoriety, that the said tenet was not received as handed down by universal tradition, and consequently was not revealed. No Catholic then could in conscience receive it as *faith*; nor could any one, consistent with his leading principle of admitting no new revelations, believe it revealed. Let no one urge that Catholics might do it, though *inconsistently*. It is not in the nature of man to be either universally depraved or foolish; both which would have been the case of the Catholics in admitting a new article of faith against their knowledge and conscience. To admit an article of faith, is to believe that the said article was revealed by God, and was handed down by universal tradition; to suppose it new, is in fact supposing that the Catholics never heard of it; and consequently they must know that it was neither handed down by tradition, nor believed till then. This can never happen to those who admit no new revelation.

To reject an old article of faith, is to suppose, that the whole Catholic Church ceased to admit a revealed truth, which was publicly and universally allowed as revealed but just before. That is, in other words, the whole Catholic Church ceased to acknowledge, what was a fact of public notoriety to every one of its members.

They must then have abandoned an article of their creed against their own conviction. This may be done, by private persons: but I hope such a number of men of all nations as compose the body of the Catholic Church, can never be so universally depraved as to lay aside their conscience, in matters of this moment.

I grant

I grant it is possible, and experience proves it, that private persons may be led astray, may cease to believe what is the public faith of the Church, or hold forth tenets as of faith, which were not believed before. This arises from the restless spirit of inquiry, so common among all descriptions of men, on the one hand; and the natural prepossession of every man for his own way of thinking, on the other. We all agree that the scriptures are the word of God. If any one employed in the study of the bible should happen to lose sight of tradition, or the public faith of the Church, he is then left to his own judgment; and if he should happen to be mistaken, he will either reject the faith of the Church, or adopt new systems of belief. In both cases he must prefer his own judgment to tradition and church authority; and whoever obstinately maintains this will be cut off and separated from the communion of the Church. In general whoever attempts it does not wait for her sentence, but feels himself cut off from her communion, by the fact alone.

We allow then that private errors may be introduced; but this no ways affects the inerrancy of tradition. It is a voucher, an *infallible one*, of the public catholic faith. Universal folly and depravity are equally repugnant to the nature of man. It would be however both folly and depravity to reject a received tenet of faith, or introduce a new one. Catholics throughout the world are all acquainted with the belief of the Church; they all know that no power on earth has any authority to abrogate what is faith, or create a new one. Then the whole Church can never conspire in either, without abandoning the first principles of their religion: I hope this will not be asserted of so numerous a body as the Catholics dispersed through the world.

Let us now make the application of these principles to the two articles, which Mr. Wharton pretends were introduced into the faith of the Church, the sacraments of the eucharist and penance. I will then suppose with Mr. Wharton, that the present belief of the church concerning

cerning the Eucharist was introduced in the 9th century. He does not agree in this with several others of *his communion*; but the argument is equally strong, whatever epoch be assigned. The whole Catholic Church therefore did not believe the real presence and transubstantiation in the 8th century: but only presence by faith. It was then in the 8th century the *public faith of the church*, that *the sacrament of the Lord's supper was only bread and wine taken in remembrance of Christ's death*; and consequently it was publicly and universally known to be an article of faith. The faith of the Church is, in every age, a fact of public notoriety. It was as well known in the 8th century, as it is now. But in the 9th century the public faith of the whole catholic world (some few obscure individuals excepted) held forth the real presence and transubstantiation. Thus we find a sudden transition from a revealed tenet, publicly and universally acknowledged as the faith of the Church; to the public and universal acknowledgment of the opposite error, received as an article of faith. Mr. Wharton may contend, if he pleases, that this transition was not made in so short a time. Whatever time he assigns, this remains fact, in his supposition, that in the 8th century, the public faith of the Church was *presence by faith only*. Now had this ever been the faith of the Church, it could never have been altered. The public faith of the Church must be known to every well instructed Catholic; no alteration can ever be made unknown to any one. The whole world must have seen and felt the change.

Then the whole Catholic world must have rejected an article of faith, handed down by universal tradition; and received as an article of faith, what they knew was neither handed down by tradition, nor believed before. In other words, they must have rejected from their creed, what they all knew was an article of faith; and must have admitted into their creed an article which they knew was not revealed. What motives can ever induce the whole Catholic world to reject what they know



know is true, or admit, what they know is false? Mr. Wharton may reason from private facts, or partial information, but he will never persuade any man in his senses, that so great a number of men as have always composed the body of the Catholic Church, can so far abandon their honesty and common sense, as to become both fools and knaves, in direct opposition to their own principles, of universal tradition, and admitting no new revelations.

The article of penance is yet more home to the question. For besides the general argument above, which holds in every article of Catholic faith, this sacrament implies a divine ordination of the most humiliating nature; and generally looked upon as the hardest to comply with of any catholic maxim; a full confession, or self-accusation of every species of guilt contracted by sin. Mr. Wharton says, page 30. that "centuries were requisite to settle this practice in its present form." But I shall take the liberty to assert, that fifty centuries could not have settled it; had it not been of divine institution. Whenever this practice was first mentioned, to follow Mr. Wharton's supposition, the whole Catholic world must have known that it was a new thing, not handed down by tradition, nor of consequence could it be a command of God. The whole world then must have admitted as a command of God, what they knew was not commanded at all. They therefore imposed upon themselves a very heavy yoke as of divine institution, which they knew was neither believed nor practised as such before; and of course was not so in reality. Be it ever remembered, that the pastors who are supposed to have forged these fetters, formed them to bind themselves, as well as the multitude: now it is repugnant to human nature, insulting to common sense, to suppose that the pastors of the Catholic Church throughout the world should seek to impose on the numerous flock they had to govern; and on themselves, at the same time, a grievous burden as binding from a special command of God, which themselves knew well did not bind

bind at all. But it is still more absurd to suppose, that the whole Church should admit this galling yoke as a divine precept, which they all knew God had never commanded.

Cavil out of the question, let us consider the nature of man. Wherever we see him with his native character and hereditary dispositions, he will always be found averse to controul. He will not easily submit to arbitrary rules; much less will he tamely subject himself to heavy burdens without sufficient authority to give them sanction. But how can he be brought to submit to them, from interior conviction of divine appointment, when he must know that they have no claim to this origin?

From what men are, we may form a judgment of what they have been. Let any man at present attempt to introduce, as a divine precept, any similar practice. Let him endeavour to persuade the whole Catholic world, that they are bound, by a special command of God, to wear a hair-shirt, a crown of thorns, &c. every Catholic would laugh at him: nay if he persisted obstinately in his error, he would be cut off from the Church as an innovator. To dash out of the creed an article of public catholic faith, or to introduce a new one, it is previously necessary to persuade the whole Catholic world out of their honesty, as well as out of their senses. They never can admit either while they remain Catholics.

With Mr. Wharton's good leave, I shall remind him of a truth, which he knows well no Catholic can doubt of, that, whatever veneration we pay to Popes or Councils, we acknowledge no power in the Church to blot out an article of faith, nor to introduce a new one. Universal tradition is our rule; the public faith of the church is our standard. All the power we believe the pastors are intitled to, in articles of faith or divine precepts, is barely to declare what the Church has received handed down to her as the law of her divine spouse. We think moreover, that as the existence of tradition, in every age, as a fact of public notoriety, in the known  
faith

faith of the Catholic Church, they may decide on this fact without danger of error. Mr. Wharton, and every other well informed person knows well what were the doctrines of Luther, from the notoriety of the fact, handed down by tradition. We all know, by the same means, what were the doctrines of the Council of Trent, which condemned the errors of Luther: why then could not the Council of Trent, from the notoriety of this tradition, discover what tenets were publicly taught as the faith of the Church 500 years before? and so on to the times of the Apostles. It is in vain to alledge the darkness of the times: the bishops in general were men of some information, and at least knew their catechism; some among them were always men of eminence; and could defend the public faith of the Church against the vain pretensions of the self-created infallibility of private judgment. They all were sufficient witnesses of the faith of the Church, which was their own belief.

I shall now prevent two objections, which some might think of consequence, against this doctrine of universal tradition. First it may be said, that ancient facts, which are no where recorded in history, might safely be conveyed by universal tradition; but if they are written, we need only to read, and our own private judgment will inform us what has happened in former ages. Thus we read that Cæsar reigned Dictator in Rome; that William Duke of Normandy conquered England, &c. We read also in the bible, not only the life and death of our divine Redeemer, but also the doctrines which he taught, and commanded to be observed. We have therefore only to examine this book to discover the faith we are to profess.

After what has been said, a few words will serve for an answer. It is evident, that neither the English, nor Roman histories, nor even the bible itself have any authority, only as they are supported by universal tradition. It is tradition alone which tells us that the books in the bible are the genuine works of inspired authors;



and that they are transmitted to us uncorrupted by other hands. We know likewise the success of the Norman invasion, and of Cæsar, because universal tradition has given a sanction to the histories which relate these facts.

It may be said, since then we have these books handed down and authenticated by tradition, why not apply to them, the same as to other histories?

I answer, This is an inconsistent way in the principles of Mr. Wharton, as I have already shewn. Moreover, even admitting the books, there is such a difficulty in discovering the revealed sense of the bible, that it would be evident presumption to attempt it from private judgment; and this also has been proved. But there is an immense difference between the bible and every other history. The latter are only read to acquire a knowledge of past transactions. The public and interesting facts alone are generally attended to. Private anecdotes are not worth the notice of the public at large. But in the bible every thing is of consequence. It is the word of God: the revelation of his will to mankind. Hence besides a history of those transactions, on which our religion is grounded, it is a law, by which we must regulate our faith and morals.

Did any other book contain a law, besides the history of the times, we should never have an end of debates about the sense of it, if the real sense was of any concern to us. In this case we should indeed have an authority established to decide and determine the doubts and controversies: while the eternal wisdom of our Creator is supposed to leave *his law*, instituted for human salvation, exposed to the nonsense, quibbles, and contradictions of every man existing. I hope it will be granted, that the real sense of any human law is more adapted to *our senses and our understanding*, than the revealed law of Christ, which is impervious to both; and consequently a judge of controversies is more necessary.

The

The other objection is drawn from fact. It may possibly be allowed that this doctrine of universal tradition may be admitted as to those public tenets of the Church, which were always known and believed at all times, and in all places. But in this case a great number of articles, introduced by Popes and Councils, must be struck out of the creed: and what then becomes of the inerrancy of the Church?

If this be admitted, we have done with private judgment, at least in those articles which constitute the public faith of the Church: and consequently Mr. Wharton's arguments against the eucharist and penance fall to the ground; for those are public tenets of the Catholic faith; if any article of the creed can be called such. However, to clear this point.

I beg leave to remark, that the decisions of the Church are many. I will even allow, that several are by no means articles of faith. Some regard only preliminaries of faith. But this is no argument. For although the Church exacts submission from the faithful to all her decrees; and justly too, as she is the highest court of judicature, to whom an appeal can be made in doctrinal points: yet she never obtruded her decisions as articles of *Catholic faith*, unless they were at all times and in all places believed as such.

To set this in a clearer light, I shall explain the church's method of pronouncing her definitions. When the Apostles were destined by the Spirit of God, to preach the gospel in all the nations of the then known world; they formed a creed containing the chief articles of that faith, which they announced to the world as necessary to salvation. By this profession of faith, the converts to Christianity, however dispersed and unconnected with each other, were in one communion, or unity of faith. It is however very evident, that this creed does not express several tenets of revelation, only by reference to the authority of the Church. We find therein no mention of the necessity or operation of grace and free will; nor of any sacraments, of their minister

or effect: yet all these are very essential tenets of faith, in some given sense, in every communion of Christians.

But as the very existence of the gospel revelation was founded on grace, it was not necessary that this should be particularly mentioned. The sacraments were to be in constant use, as the common means ordained by providence to convey that grace to the souls of the faithful; and therefore they could not be ignorant of them. Hence it was sufficient to express the belief of a Church, in which these things were practised.

No sooner was the gospel published but errors and heresies were broached, by private men; who, stimulated by interest or ambition, endeavoured to draw disciples after them. It is worth remarking that these errors were always introduced by the conceits of *private judgment*, in opposition to church authority. In process of time jarrings and disputes were multiplied beyond number. Some of these errors were more evidently repugnant to the public faith of the church than others: sometimes it was hard to determine which side of the debate, if either, was erroneous. Many contrary opinions are at this day supported in the schools, which the Church leaves to the disputes of divines, because she will not determine or decide when faith is not in danger.

Whenever any doctrines were canvassed before the tribunal of the Church; they were always tried by the rule of living tradition, or the public faith of the Church. If an opinion was found subversive of the Catholic faith, it was condemned as heretical. But it often appeared that a proposition, though not directly repugnant to faith, might still be of *dangerous tendency, offensive to pious ears*, and if understood in the obvious meaning, *might lead to errors directly subversive of the known principles of Christianity*. Such is Mr. Wharton's proposition, page the 7th, "Their endeavours can never be ineffectual, whose reason and conscience tell them they are in the way to salvation:" for as I have already shewn, whoever fancies himself in the right, Jew, Mahometan



Mahometan or Deist, may sit down secure of salvation, under the shadow of this sentence.

In these cases the Church has indeed pronounced sentence; and as there is no appeal from her authority, her judgment is irrevocable; but she never gave a definitive sentence, on these matters, so as to make them articles of Catholic faith: nor ever condemned a proposition as heretical, which was not subversive of the known faith of the Church.

Had Mr. Wharton attended to this, I presume he would not have imposed upon us articles of faith which we never heard of: the *supremacy of the Roman Church*, page 22. nor points of discipline, page 25. *public service in an unknown tongue*; \* much less ought he to

\* The Mass in Latin has long been exclaimed against, by many reformers, for what reason it is a difficult matter to discover. I fear it has been done chiefly through a spirit of party, to keep alive the groundless alarms of the illiterate. Let us attend to fact; and the practice will not appear so noxious as it is generally held forth. Whatever is meant to carry instruction, information or exhortation to the multitude, is always conveyed in the vulgar language throughout the whole Catholic world. The prayers and devotions made use of in private are always in a language, which the reader understands: and even besides general instructions to inform the ignorant what is done in the sacrifice of the Mass, they have it all translated into their mother-tongue. Hence those, who think such translations conducive to devotion in their way, may join the priest, in the same prayers, from beginning to end. Every well instructed Catholic knows what the priest is doing; and those who chuse it may also know what he says. Where then is the mischief, in his performing in Latin?

Be it remembered, that the Mass is a sacrifice, even the same, which Jesus Christ offered to his eternal Father on the cross, different only in the manner of offering: that the priest alone is the minister thereof: the people are only assistants for their own devotion and profit: but no ways necessary to the ministry. Now I presume that the private devotion and profit of any one *assisting* at a sacrifice may be as much promoted by his own feelings, if he knows what is going on, as if

to impose upon us as an article of faith, a mere speculative opinion of some scholastic divines, which is justly ridiculed.

he heard and repeated every word pronounced by the priest. No assistant can rationally object against his not being permitted to do the same actions as the priest; the words are equally part of the sacrifice, and therefore the business of the priest alone. Let the rest attend to what he performs, and in the same manner as they would have done at the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross, and they will undoubtedly carry away their profit and reward, though they should not pronounce one word during the whole time. I think the people at large are better directed by their eyes than their ears, in this sort of presence and attendance.

But why not say it in English? For two capital reasons. First, uniformity requires it to be said in one of the dead languages. For in this case, let a priest go into another country, he may say Mass for the people the same as one of their fellow-subjects, which he could not do was it performed in the common language of the place, which he does not understand. Again a Catholic going into foreign countries may assist at Mass, the same as if he was at home.

Secondly, all the living languages are in a constant state of melioration. None of them are fixed. The English language of 300 years back would not be understood at present by three-fourths of the nation. Had the Mass been said in English at that time, it would not be understood at present by a great majority of the English; unless it had been new modelled according to the fashionable taste of the English tongue, by every Addison, Steel, Pope, or Johnson, who have succeeded one another in different periods of time. I think no one would contend for that: if he should, then let him plead for the liturgy in the vulgar dialect of every different county in England, in which the minister shall be placed. This would render almost all of them incapable of their functions, until they had learned the jargon of the place, where their cure is situated. Do the Greeks condemn the liturgy in an unknown tongue, who officiate in the classic Greek, which is not understood by one in ten of the Greek church? In a word, the objection would have some some foundation, if the question was of public prayer, in which the community is to join, and cannot for want of knowing what

ridiculed by the wisest among them, " a common store-house, in which are laid up the superfluous merits of the saints, to be drawn from thence, by the Pope, and applied, as he thinks proper, to the benefit of the living and the dead." *ibid.* This is very uncandid; but misrepresentation and calumny are the only arms against truth. To return to the point.

It only requires common sense and attention to judge, if a proposition is directly subversive of the faith of the Church. In more abstruse matters the pastors consult tradition, scripture and the fathers, and then decide according to the merits of the cause. But as I said before, they will not pronounce sentence, unless the principles of faith be in danger.

In general, whoever wishes to form new systems, does it in an abstruse and difficult question. A direct denial of faith is a bold attempt, reserved only for those few undaunted minds, who set all rule and government at defiance. Those however have always been more severe against their refractory followers, than ever the Catholic Church was against them. Calvin burnt a Socinian alive, because his *private judgment*, his *reason and conscience* could not discover the *Trinity* in the bible. What did this self-created reformer deserve for dogmatizing, that God made every reprobate for the express purpose of damnation?

When Arius attacked the divinity of the Son of God; although he endeavoured to shade his opinions, yet they were universally known to be subversive of the public faith of the Church. She had always believed " in God the Father. and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; and in the Holy Ghost." The consequence was

is said. Every one of any information knows how ill Queen Elizabeth's first missionaries were received in Ireland, when they were compelled to change their Mass, at which they could assist with devotion, for a new liturgy, consisting only in prayers, which they could not understand: but the case is quite different in the present question.

evident,



evident, that these three persons were but one and the same God. This Arius could not subscribe to, because his *private judgment* did not discover it in the bible; his *reason and conscience* told him, that this doctrine contradicted "*the only means of arriving at truth, his senses, and his understanding.*" The cause was examined, in the General Council of Nice, the tradition of ages and nations was consulted, and Arius was condemned as an heretic. The General Council of Constantinople proceeded in the same manner in the condemnation of the Macedonian heresy, which denied the divinity of the Holy Ghost. These two Councils formed a new creed; but it was never looked upon as enforcing new articles of faith, but only as an explication of the public faith of the Church, *compendiously delivered in the Apostles creed.*

Nestorius in the 5th century began to teach, that there were two persons in Christ. That we were indebted to the human person for the benefit of our redemption; but the divine person was no otherwise concerned therein than by a moral union to human nature. This doctrine evidently tended to diminish the price of our ransom, and undermine the faith of the Church; "*and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was conceived, &c.*" The relative *who* evidently implies, that he who was conceived, born, &c. is the same, who in the 2d article is called the *only Son of God*, and not two according to the doctrine of Nestorius: and therefore the Church assembled in the General Council of Ephesus, condemned this error as *heretical*. It was then first professed that there was only one person in Christ; which again was never considered, nor intended as a new article of faith; but only an explication of the faith of ages and nations. The same may be said of Eutychius, who leaning too much to the other side, in opposing Nestorius, fell into the opposite error, by confounding the natures in Christ: and was condemned by the General Council of Chalcedon, &c. &c. &c.

In

In the 5th century, the faith of the Church concerning the necessity of divine grace was daringly attacked by Cœlestius and Pelagius. The faith of the Catholic world at that time was barely what it is now, as express in the words of our Catechism, in answer to this question: "Can we do any good of ourselves? No, we cannot, without the help of God's grace." Many Councils were held in Africa, and elsewhere, in support of this faith, against the many errors of the two named heresiarchs. Several different explications, definitions, &c. were made against them, concerning the necessity of grace, original sin, &c. yet none of them was ever considered as a new article of faith, but only as an explication of the public faith of the Church.

The Predestinarians overstrained the question to the other side, by maintaining the necessity of that irresistible grace, which bears down all before it. This evidently destroyed free will; and consequently was not that grace which the Church held necessary. She always believed the necessity of grace to do any thing to attain sanctification or eternal life; but she always believed that this grace left the rights of liberty untouched. This is a compendium of the Catholic faith on this head, from the times of the Apostles, to this day. There is no tenet of faith, which has been so often and variously attacked as this; and of course there is no doctrine on which so many definitions have been pronounced, as in this case of liberty and grace. It is indeed another of those mysteries, which entirely escapes the observation of the *senses*, and the penetration of the *understanding*. Numbers of systems have been invented to reconcile these seemingly jarring tenets: whenever the Church found these systems subversive of grace, or the rights of free agency, she always condemned them as heretical. When they were not clearly repugnant to faith, and still could not be reconciled with the privileges of grace, or free will; she indeed censured such systems as *dangerous, scandalous, tending to heresy*, &c. according to the merits of the cause; but never condemned

demned them as *heretical*. But whatever opinions were invented, in this delicate article, if they admitted the necessity of grace, and were still reconcileable with liberty, the Church has always left them to be freely disputed by divines, without defining against either side.

Let Mr. Wharton recollect what happened in the famous congregations *De auxiliis*. The Society, to which he *formerly* belonged, thought that their adversaries the Dominicans gave into the errors of the Predestinarians. These again maintained, that the Jesuits leaned to Pelagianism. The contest was brought before the Pope. After many meetings, much animosity and recrimination, much explication, embarrassment and quibble, they were all ordered home, had leave to defend their respective sentiments *as well as they could*, and were forbidden to censure their antagonists. It was observed in these meetings, that both sides allowed the necessity of grace, both admitted free will: this was all the faith of the Church demanded: and therefore she would not pronounce on either side of the question. Is this seeking to augment the number of articles of faith? Mr. Wharton however is well acquainted with this fact. O! Candor!!!

I shall pass over many errors proscribed by the Church, to insist more particularly on those points, which have furnished matter of cavil for Mr. Wharton. Page 30. he mentions the Millenarian heresy; or the opinion, that after the renovation of the world, Christ will reign a thousand years with his saints upon earth. This, he says, "was maintained as an article of the Catholic faith, by almost every Father who lived after the times of the Apostles. He then quotes Stapleton, and Burnet. I shall not give myself the trouble of looking into Burnet, to see whether he *demonstrates*, as Mr. Wharton terms it, what I know is false. Doctor Stapleton indeed quotes several, who according to him, believed that the beatitude promised to the saints is deferred till the general resurrection. Here again Mr. Wharton



Wharton has juggled private opinions into articles of faith, has totally misrepresented the case; and this too with a compleat knowledge of the cause. He attempted to prove that the Millenarian system was once an article of faith: now the Millenarian system, as invented by *Cerintus*, is too absurd and indecent to mention here. That afterwards planned by Papias, who was followed by Ireneus and some other private doctors, admitted only *lawful pleasures* into the thousand years reign of Christ after the resurrection. Tertullian only allowed spiritual pleasures in this kingdom. Some thought that this kingdom of 1000 years duration was to be compleated before the general resurrection, as St. Justin. I shall only quote the last named Father: if Mr. Wharton is well informed, he knows I am right; if not he ought to blush, for asserting so boldly what he did not know. St. Justin therefore, in his dialogue with Triphon, expressly says, that he knew many of *pure and pious sentiments*, who disagreed with him in this particular. How could he think their sentiments *pure and pious*, if he thought his own opinion was an article of faith.

In fact whatever was asserted on this head was bare opinion; and among those, who maintained these opinions, scarce two agreed together; and after all, the rest of the world united maintained the Catholic faith. One thing I must insist upon, that no one Father of any note, neither immediately after the Apostles, nor since, ever maintained the strict Millenarian system.

It was always the faith of the Church, that the good shall live for ever in eternal felicity, and the wicked in the torments of hell. This is *compendiously* delivered in the last article of the creed; *and life everlasting*. But here a question naturally arises, *Are the good to take possession of this beatitude immediately after death, or only after the number of the elect is compleated*.

I would willingly ask, why this question could not be examined, by universal tradition, as well as any other. It was discussed in the Council of Florence: the Fathers there assembled were composed of Greeks and Latins united,

united, were come from so many different countries, that they could not be ignorant of the faith of the Church dispersed through the world, and therefore they had a right to define that the souls of the saints, who had contracted no stain after baptism, or were perfectly purged before death, or after death in purgatory, are immediately received into heaven, and enjoy the intuitive vision of the Deity. Nor did they ever think of framing a new article of faith, but barely to explain the 12 article of the Apostles creed; according to the sense of universal tradition.

Mr. Wharton's main purpose, page 30. and the following, is to prove, that some points are at one time matters of opinion, which are afterwards matters of faith: or *vice versa*. He first brings the Millenarian system as an article of faith after the times of the Apostles, and afterwards condemned as heretical. This he knew was false; and to screen himself he quotes Burnet, who *demonstrates* for him, what he himself should have proved, because he asserts it. But he finds another shift; Dr. Stapleton cites a number of Fathers, who were of *opinion*, that the souls of good men did not enjoy the beatific vision previous to the general resurrection. Let Mr. Wharton remember, that though all the Fathers had been of that *opinion*, the Millenarian system would not follow from thence. That opinion supposes the souls of good men to enjoy the beatific vision immediately after the general resurrection: but the Millenarian system supposes, that after the general resurrection, Christ will reign a thousand years on earth, previous to their being introduced into the presence of God. These systems differ widely.

Again Mr. Wharton should prove, that it was not only the *opinion*, but the *faith*, of not almost all the primitive Fathers, but of all the Church: this he knows well cannot be done. The private opinion of Fathers is not binding; we look up to the decisions of the Church for our faith. She has decided this point according to the rule

rule of universal tradition, which I have proved infallible.

The next tenet of the Church which Mr. Wharton asserts has changed from *opinion* to *faith*, is the necessity and divine institution of auricular confession: and to prove this he has again recourse to *old authors*. He quotes Alcuin, Ep. 26. But that letter, which is a very short one, (Paris edition 1617) is all about the Lunar motion. I examined the 16th, 36th, and several others, thinking perhaps that the printer might have placed one number for another. I found nothing but Catholic doctrine. In page 1161, he has a sermon to young persons, to engage them not to be afraid of confessing their most heinous crimes, and speaks as strong and clear on the subject as any Catholic could do at this day. I therefore laid him aside after three hours search for the words quoted by Mr. Wharton, "that some said it was sufficient to confess our sins to God alone," which I could not find in Alcuin.

The next quoted is The penitential of Theodore Archbishop of Canterbury, from Ulther's *Answer*, &c. I am very sorry I cannot have recourse to Sir Robert Cotton's library, where this *penitential* is found, and from whence are transcribed two remarkable passages: "It is lawful, that confession be made to God alone, if it be requisite;" and again, "Learned men think differently upon this matter, because the doctors seem to have delivered various and almost opposite opinions upon it." I think the first expression is either nonsense, or an evident contradiction. It is at any rate unintelligible to me. I shall leave it there, with only this remark, that half quotations, with a word or two added, may make the wisest of the Fathers inconsistent with himself. I never heard of Theodore being esteemed heterodox, and therefore shall believe him Catholic till some clearer text proves him a reformer of the times he lived in. The other text is very easily understood, as I shall explain.



Gratian, whom Mr. Wharton brings in, as advancing that "some maintain that forgiveness of sins may be obtained, without any confession made to the Church or a priest." Here again is only half a quotation. Gratian proposes a question, "Whether any one can satisfy God, by the sole contrition of the heart, and secret satisfaction, without oral confession?" and then gives the first answer in the affirmative; and quotes SS. Ambrose, Austin, Chrysostom, &c. this he treats upon in the first Dist. *De pœnit.* down to Can. *Omnis qui non diligit.* Then he proposes the negative opinion, in these words: "Others on the contrary assert, that no one can be cleansed from sin, without confession and satisfaction." He treats and proves this opinion at large down to Can. *Quamvis plenitudo*: and in Can. *Quis aliquando*, he explains the authorities quoted in favour of the first opinion, of public penance; and, in my opinion, all along seems bent to the latter sentiment; though he concludes with leaving the choice to the reader: "for, says he, each has its patrons, wise and religious men." Whatever sentiment he be of, it is little to the purpose. The bare question was, whether sin was remitted by contrition previous to absolution; or only by virtue of the judicial sentence pronounced by the priest, as explained in the sentiments of Peter Lombard, and the supposed Cardinal Hugo; I there remarked that there were different sentiments on this head; and so there are at present. The Church has never yet defined what sort of contrition is necessary to receive absolution.

Whatever may be the opinion of Gratian, he neither denies penance to be a sacrament, nor the necessity of confession, nor the judiciary use of the keys; nothing can therefore be proved from him.

I wish Mr. Wharton had read these old authors, he would have saved me much trouble, which I have been forced to take to shew his quotations false. He would have prevented a remark which I must make, that what

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he says, page the 21st, *That Peter Lombard was supported by almost all the schoolmen of his time*, is absolutely false. Gratian evidently proves the contrary.

I could not find Maldonatus de Sacram. but if he says, "that all the Canonists following their first interpreter (Gratian) maintain that confession was introduced by ecclesiastical institution," he is egregiously mistaken. Gratian says no such thing, nor does any other Canonist, that I can meet with. However I beg leave to remark, that seeking among Canonists for articles of faith, is like seeking nails at a jeweller's. The lawyers would laugh at Mr. Wharton, if he quoted divines against them.

Page 32, he exhibits the doctrine conveyed by the word transubstantiation, as new, and only defined in the Council of Lateran, as Scotus assures us. Paschasius Radbertus was the first who wrote seriously and copiously concerning it, according to Bellarmin: but he allows that his doctrine was not settled, in his letter to Frudegardus. Rabanus Maurus, styled by Baronius the Luminary of Germany, wrote expressly against this novelty, as also Ratramus, or Bertram. Mr. Wharton concludes this fertile page with an air of exultation and triumph: "Thus we see, that the doctrine of the carnal presence was no sooner openly maintained, than some of the most celebrated doctors of the time arose to combat it; without incurring any suspicion of heresy from their opponents."

This is very artful indeed. Mr. Wharton knows well, that Catholics urge the opposition of eminent doctors against novelty, as an evident argument of the faith of the Church; he knows also, that no champion of the Reformation could ever give the least shadow of an answer; hence he not only prevents this difficulty, but even turns our own arms against us. But neither art nor cunning shall prevail against truth.

Had Mr. Wharton added to the catalogue of *celebrated doctors*, the names of Scotus Erigena, and Berengarius, he would have compleated the list of all those,

who arose to combat this doctrine; and would have found the rest of the *doctors*, the bishops, &c. of the whole Catholic world against him. I suppose he was ashamed of Scotus's absurdities in other matters, and of the hypocritical changes and recantations of Berengarius; and therefore did not think either of them a sufficient voucher, for what he so boldly asserts. But to the point.

Paschasius had no manner of doubt about the Catholic doctrine; this, he frequently says, is the faith of the world: nor had Frudegardus, to whom he writes. Frudegardus had always believed, with the whole Catholic Church, that the Eucharist was not bread and wine, but the body and blood of Christ: "This, says  
 " Paschasius, you say you believed before, and that you  
 " read it in my book, about the sacraments. But you  
 " say that you afterwards read in St. Austin's 3d book  
 " *De doct. Christ.* that the saying, *This is the body and*  
 " *blood of Christ*, is a tropical expression. But if that  
 " is a figurative saying, an appearance rather than truth,  
 " you say I do not know how I am to understand it.  
 " Then you add; and if I believe it to be the same  
 " body, which he took from his Mother, the Virgin  
 " Mary, the same great Doctor declares this a grievous  
 " crime: which sentence strikes with horror those who  
 " receive it; if they do not believe that to be in the  
 " sacrament; which truth itself plainly declares is there.  
 " And if they do believe it; as some do, they incur the  
 " grievous crime, because they believe falsely, because  
 " it is said that *Christ can be devoured by the teeth*.  
 " Hence it is a crime to believe, as those did, to whom  
 " he said, *unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man*.  
 " This they could not bear, because they understood it  
 " wrong: and therefore, if any one says, that this flesh  
 " and this blood are so the same (with that which Christ  
 " took from his mother) without a mystery and sacra-  
 " ment, and not to be taken partly in figure, as those  
 " carnal men, thinking carnally, understood it, he de-  
 " stroys the whole."

Frudegardus



Frudegardus had always believed, with the whole Church, that the sacrament contained the body and blood of Christ, *which truth itself plainly declares to be there*; but was in doubt how to understand it, from a wrong explication of the text of St. Austin, quoted before. Some, he says, believed it the same body, which Christ took from his Virgin Mother, and in the same natural state, so as to be the immediate object of our senses, to be *devoured by the teeth*. Frudegardus consults Paschasius, who explains the difficulty, and says that it is indeed a crime to believe it so far the same body, as to think that it is present without veil or mystery, and not in a sacramental manner. This is the whole of the question. There is not an insinuation of any other doubt, in the letter to Frudegardus; nor is there the least hint that any one member of the Catholic Church ever doubted of the real presence of Christ's body, in this sacrament.

When Scotus Erigena first began to explain this away, wherever his errors had penetrated, the Catholic doctors arose *to combat this growing error*. He was condemned in a Council at Paris, anno 1050, and again at Marseilles, 1053. Of this last Council Ascelinus, a Benedictine monk, writes to Berengarius as follows; "Be ashamed of yourself to patronize a book, which was condemned at Marseilles in a General Council. We hear also that yourself was stigmatized with the same heresy." *Letter to Berengarius*. The same error was again condemned in a Council at Rome, where Berengarius not only abjured his errors, but even burned the book of Scotus, by the orders of Pope Nicolas and the Fathers assembled.

Hence besides Paschasius, Lantfranc, and several other Catholic Doctors, we have three Councils held in different places, who all agree in the same sentiments; and condemn the opposite error of Scotus and Berengarius, as contrary to the Catholic faith of the whole Christian world, handed down by universal tradition. Suppose then Rabanus and Ratram, and if it will please Mr.

Wharton, five or six more were, at that time of a contrary sentiment; can this small number be of any weight, against such numbers on the other side; who all declare their faith to be that of the whole world? It is impossible, as I have said, for such men, of at least some information, and I hope some integrity, to be misled, in the examine of a public fact of any consequence: much less of the faith of the Church, and therefore their own belief.

If it be said, that these *celebrated doctors*, who opposed the doctrine of *carnal presence*, did not incur any suspicion of heresy from their opponents. I answer, that possibly their books were not so publicly known as to cause any great noise or dispute; and of course the Church would not pronounce sentence upon them. I have already mentioned some instances of her unwillingness to define, where the public faith of her children is not in danger.

Indeed there is no need of a public sentence, where a novelty meets the horror and detestation of all those, who are informed of it. This private censure is often sufficient to stop the *growing error*, and even to reclaim the offender; in which case the Church will not exert her authority. I could mention several novelties which have been suppressed in their origin, by this private condemnation, without any public definition of the Church.

Thus much is evident; had the Church looked upon these authors as publicly patronizing the doctrines of Scotus Erigena, she most certainly would have condemned them as well as Berengarius. Common sense will inform any man, that a doctrine proscribed as heretical in Scotus and Berengarius, can never be deemed orthodox in Rabanus and Ratram.

I think indeed this is a clear proof, that no author of those times, except the two named heretics, ever did publicly support that doctrine for which they were condemned. In fact, Rabanus is so far from maintaining the doctrine of *carnal absence*, that he is expressly cen-  
sured

tured for the opposite error of the Stercorarians, who said that Christ was so present in the sacrament, as to be *devoured by the teeth*, eaten, and digested like other meat. This is positively asserted by Herigerus Abbot of Laube, *L. de Corp. & Sang. Dom.* and by William of Malmesbury, in his *Epist. ad Robert Frat.* How will Mr. Wharton reconcile this opinion of Rabanus with the doctrine of *presence by faith only*?

But he wrote against Paschasius and his disciples? I believe he did. Though even this is denied by some, because he never mentions Paschasius, and the errors he refutes are not found in that author. He might blame Paschasius for his plain and open way of exhibiting the doctrine of the Church, as seeming to lean to the errors of the Stercorarians: and this is all he means in the words quoted by Mr. Wharton. Why did not this Gentleman read Mabillon, whom he mentions, he would have found more than sufficient to convince him, that Rabanus was a good Catholic, and Ratram also, whom I shall explain more at large, as I have his book before me:

Ratram then, in the beginning of his book *De Corp. & Sang. Christi*, says: "For while some of the faithful say concerning the body and blood of Christ, which is daily celebrated in the Church, that there is *no veil*, nor figure, but that the very thing itself is *openly* and *really* exhibited: and others affirm that these things are *present*, in a *mystery* or *figure*; that it is one thing, which appears to our corporal senses; and another thing, which our faith beholds; it is plain there is no small difference among them."

Let Mr. Wharton take notice, that Ratram calls this sacrament the *body and blood of Christ*; not the figure of it. He says, that it is daily celebrated in the Church. This sacrament is no where *daily* celebrated, but in the *Mass*. He mentions two opinions; the first asserted that the body of Christ was plainly and openly exhibited to the senses, without *veil* or *mystery*; the other maintained, that the body and blood of Christ were indeed *present*,



*present*, but in *mystery* and *figure*. That it is one thing which we behold with our corporal senses, and another which faith represents. This last sentiment, which Ratram strives to prove, is sound Catholic doctrine. He has no third opinion of *carnal absence*.

The first opinion, which Ratram reprobates, never was the Catholic faith. It was indeed the sentiment of some in the days of Ratram, probably because they leaned too much to the side opposite the errors of Scotus Erigena. They believed, as Ratram says, that the body of Christ was really and openly exhibited to the senses; that it was therefore the body of Christ, which was eaten in its natural state, without *veil* or *mystery*; hence followed evidently the error of the Stercorarians: *That the Eternal God was devoured corporally by vermin*, &c. page 24. None of these absurdities follow from the second sentiment defended by Ratram, as the faith of the Church in his days. It is still the faith of the Catholic world; and I defy all the *fine-spun subtilty* of Mr. Wharton, or any one else, to prove the absurdities he mentions against it. Let any one explain, how the *Eternal God could be shut up* in the womb of his Virgin Mother, could suffer and die; and then I will shew how he can *be shut up in boxes*. The body, to which the Eternal God was hypostatically united, was shut up in his Mother's womb, &c. so likewise the sacrament, under which Christ is really present, is shut up in boxes; is eaten by the faithful, &c. so that the operation of the senses falls upon the appearances of bread and wine, not immediately on the body of our Lord: and this is all that is meant, by the *extravagant censure of Pope Nicholas*, page 33. It is all that Gratian means in his Comment on the Can. *Ego Berengarius*, which by the bye is Berengarius's retraction of his former errors, and the profession of his faith at that time, in the Council of Rome, as before mentioned. Mr. Wharton knows all this very well, although it serves his purpose to repre-

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sent both our tenets, and these facts, in so different a light\*.

I shall make a short digression to take notice of Mr. Wharton's note, page 24. where he brings two *negative arguments*, to prove to a *demonstration*, (which is a plain

\* In confirmation of this doctrine, I shall beg leave to quote the learned Doctor Jeremy Taylor, Sect. 1. num. 11. p. 18. He says then as follows: " It is to be enquired whether when we say we believe Christ's body to be really in the sacrament, we mean that body, that flesh that was born of the Virgin Mary, that was crucified, dead and buried? I answer, I know none else that he had or hath: there is but one body of Christ natural and glorified: but he that saith that body is glorified which was crucified, says it is the same body, but not after the same manner: and so it is in the sacrament. We eat and drink the body and blood of Christ, that was broken; and poured forth: for there is no other body, no other blood of Christ. But though it is the same we eat and drink, yet it is in another manner. And therefore when any of our Protestant Divines, or any of the Fathers deny, that body which was born of the Virgin Mary, that was crucified, to be eaten in the sacrament, as Bertram, as St. Hierom, as Clemens Alexandrinus expressly affirm; the meaning is easy; they intend that it is not eaten in a natural sense: and then calling it *corpus spirituale*, the word *spirituale* is not a substantial predicate, but is an affirmation of the manner; though in disputation it be made the predicate of the proposition, and the opposite member of a distinction. That body which was crucified is not that body that is eaten in the sacrament, if the intent of the proposition be to speak of the eating it in the same manner of being: but that body which was crucified, the same body we do eat, if the intention be to speak of the same thing in several manners of being, and operating; and this I noted, that we may not be prejudiced by words, when the notion is certain and easy. And thus far is the sense of our doctrine in this article." — And again, Sect. 12. p. 288. " They that do not confess the eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour, which flesh suffered for us: let them be anathema." — The difference between this Protestant Divine and the Catholic Church might easily be adjusted.

contradiction

contradiction) that the doctrine of transubstantiation was unknown to the ancients. The first is the silence of the Pagans. The second, from the Fathers not urging the argument of the adoration of the eucharist, as a proof of the divinity of Christ, against the Arians.

I am much surprized, that Mr. Wharton should object the silence of the Pagans, when he and every one knows well, that the ancient Christians concealed their rites and mysteries from them, as much as possible. The silence therefore of the Pagans proves only that they were not acquainted with the belief of Catholics, but by no means *demonstrates* that the Christians did not believe the real presence. I wish, however, Mr. Wharton would be so kind as to answer this question of Maximus of Madaura, in St. Austin's 43 Epist. "What is that God, whom you Christians claim as peculiar to yourselves; and whom, you say, you see in secret places." If this has any reference to the Eucharist, it proves that the Christians believed it to be God: if it has not, let any one point out *some other God*, whom the Christians could see in any place. This question unhinges the *negative demonstration* of Mr. Wharton, and at the same time confirms my answer: for although Maximus was informed of a *secret God* of the Christians, it is very plain he did not know *who he was*.

The silence of the Fathers in the Arian controversy is not more to the purpose. The arguments urged by the Fathers were not equally conclusive. Some of them brought texts and reasons, which at best were but insinuations of the Catholic faith. Some again neglected the most convincing proofs. They made use of such as were best calculated to the designs of providence. They sufficiently proved the faith of the Church to render it evidently credible; but still left some obscurity in it, lest there should be no room to exercise the submission of *reason* and *private judgment*, to the dictates of revelation: and who knows if God has not directed the Fa-  
ther,



thers to leave out some strong proofs to serve for a stumbling-block, in punishment of the pride of those, who reject the authority of the Church.

It is impossible for us, at this distance of time, to know what might have been the reasons, why each Father did not produce the most conclusive arguments to establish the faith of the Church. Their silence on any given article is not a proof of their not knowing it. Other reasons might have occurred according to times, places and circumstances; and unless we are exactly acquainted with all these matters, we cannot pronounce with any certainty. Suppose the Arians, however inconsistently, allowed adoration to Jesus Christ, then the argument of the Fathers, from the adoration of the eucharist, would not have been very forcible against them. On the other hand, if they denied adoration to be his due, they would have denied that adoration was paid to Christ either in heaven, or in the eucharist: or at best would have explained it away. Facts are trifling arguments against private judgment, which will either deny them, or shift them off by explications, as best suits the purpose. Whoever casts off the *dead weight of authority*, appeals from a plain and notorious fact, the *public faith of the Church*, to the *dead letter of the law*, misinterpreted by private judgment. The argument of public adoration paid to Christ in the eucharist, was thrown aside by Calvin, &c. as of no consequence. Again should I say; the Fathers in ancient times did not urge the argument of divine honour paid to Christ *reigning in heaven*, as a proof of his Godhead: would it follow from thence, that the Church did not pay him these honours. I hope not.

But to come closer to the question. St. Hilary, *De Trinit. L. 8. n. 13.* Paris edit. 1693, has these remarkable words: " I now ask those, who wish to establish the unity of wills only between the Father and the Son, whether Christ is now in us truly in nature, or only by agreement of wills? for if the Word is truly made flesh, and we truly take this Word flesh, in the  
" Lord's

" Lord's food: how comes it that he is not thought to  
 " remain naturally in us; who being born man assumed  
 " the nature of our flesh, now inseparably united to  
 " him; and gave to us the nature of his flesh in the sa-  
 " crament.—If therefore Christ truly assumed the  
 " flesh of our bodies, and he who was born of Mary is  
 " truly Christ, and if we truly take the flesh of his body  
 " in a mystery, how is the unity of wills alone af-  
 " fected?

I own this argument is not directly from adoration  
 paid to the eucharist; but it is a proof of the unity of  
 natures between the Father and the Son, from the reality  
 of Christ's flesh taken in the sacrament: and, I think, is a  
 plain proof of the belief of the Church at that time.

St. Ambrose, L. 1. *De fid.* c. 17. says; " Wherefore let  
 " them (the Arians) either cease to worship him, whom  
 " they call a creature, (the Son of God) or cease to call  
 " him a creature, whom they affect to worship."

St. Athanasius, Orat. 1. cont. Arian: " What have  
 " the Arians to do with the scriptures, who assert that  
 " the Word of God is a creature, and (like the hea-  
 " thens) leave the Creator to worship the creature?"  
 And again: " But these pronouncing Christ to be a  
 " creature, and nevertheless serving him, though a crea-  
 " ture, with the worship of religion and ceremonies;  
 " in what, I pray, do they differ from the heathens?"

These two last named Fathers reproach the Arians  
 for paying divine honours to Christ, whom they called a  
 creature; and in this make them idolaters; therefore  
 the Arians, however inconsistently, did pay adoration to  
 our divine Redeemer: and consequently the argument  
 from the adoration used to the eucharist could not be  
 urged against them. But to return from this digression.

It is evident, that the faith of the Church was always  
 substantially the same in this, as in every other tenet.  
 Whatever new explications or definitions she has given,  
 she never meant to create new articles of faith, but  
 barely to clear up and explain the *old Catholic* doctrine,  
 handed

handed down by universal tradition. We are in possession of the faith; our adversaries should prove against us: they are plaintiffs, we are defendants. To invalidate possession, they should shew, as clear as the sun, the default of our title. If we can only invalidate their arguments, possession still remains in our favour, and turns the scale to our tenets.

Let not Mr. Wharton cavil about the term *transubstantiation*: the Church had as good a right to consecrate that word, to express her meaning in this article, as she had to invent the word *consubstantial* to express her belief of the divinity of Christ. What signifies the word, if the sense be Catholic.

Scotus, as I have already said, was deceived, when he said the doctrine of transubstantiation was not of faith before the Council of Lateran: if he meant what these words import. But I am convinced he did not. It is a common custom with scholastic divines to say, that a doctrine, which may be considered as an explication of an article of faith, is not itself to be believed as faith, till it has received the public and express sanction of the Church. But they all allow that in all decisions the Church must decide according to the faith, which she has received from the Apostles; and consequently the decisions of the Church are bare explications, but are not new articles of faith, as explained before.

However I disclaim all these old authors. I look up to the Church of Christ for my faith. By this I will stand or fall, as I must be judged by it.

To finish the question of the definitions of the Church. The Council of Trent proceeded in the same manner, as every Council had done before. The faith of the Church was explained, universal tradition consulted; and by this rule the various errors, absurdities and blasphemies of Luther and his followers were censured. The Fathers of this venerable assembly proceeded with caution, and by common consent formed their decrees and canons according to the belief they had respectively received from their predecessors. Luther, and his asso-



ciate reformers, were condemned in the same manner, by the same legal authority, as was Arius at Nice, Macedonius at Constantinople, &c. The Church in all these cases opposed her decrees as irrefragable decisions against the ravings of private judgment: if Luther, &c. had any right to appeal from the definitions of the Council of Trent; every heretic, from Simon Magus downwards, has an equal claim to private judgment; and consequently were unjustly condemned.

I do not mean to insinuate, that all the definitions of the Council of Trent are articles of faith: I know well that several of them are not. The errors of Luther, &c. were many. Some more, some less evidently undermined the belief of the Church. Some did not directly regard revealed doctrines. All these were canvassed; and when the Council found it necessary to pronounce sentence, it was done with decency and decorum. Now although they did not always proscribe these tenets as heretical, this being the last appeal, in points of doctrine, it would be but decency in any private person to submit to this authority. The Fathers here assembled from all parts of the earth, were a complete collective evidence of the faith of the Catholic world: they only wanted competent information to compare it with the doctrines of Luther; and found judgment to decide on the agreement or repugnance between them. I hope they will be thought capable of this task. If not, there never was in the Church an assembly competent to judge in matters of faith.

Having thus established the authority of the Church, I think it is easy to determine where her inerrancy resides. It is then in the universality of her consent. This is very easy to be found: the pastors, who teach their flock the public faith of the Church, will scarcely be liable to error, in a fact of public notoriety. Should any of them wish to introduce novelties, they would soon be found out and contradicted.

This has always been an easy matter, and is still as easy as ever. We all allow the Sovereign Pontiff, as  
head

head of the Church, a power to decide provisionally on any point in debate: and his decrees are binding, till the consent of the Church is known; but the private disputes of scholastic divines about the infallibility of the Pope are nothing to the purpose.

When any one therefore is sufficiently convinced of the necessity of Church authority, to guide him to the knowledge of revealed truths, from such motives as render his *submission rational*, according to his circumstances of capacity and education, he may safely rely on this authority for his faith. He believes the articles which this authority proposes to him, because God has revealed them: he knows God has revealed them, because the Church proposes them as such: he relies on the Church, because *reason* and *experience* tell him *forcibly*, that her authority alone can be a sure guide to faith. This is a *rational investigation*.

Should he afterwards have doubts and anxieties about any article of his creed; it is certainly laudable to clear up the point. A momentary attention to the authority of the Church, of which he is *habitually* convinced, would disperse the mist. Should he doubt of this authority itself; and this barely for want of sufficient conviction, if he wishes however to consider this point in the scales of *impartiality and candor*, and takes proper means to get every necessary information, his ignorance is not a fault, but misfortune, and therefore he is still a member of the Catholic Church. But should any one, after sufficient motives proposed, and duly weighed, still remain doubtful; this cannot be from real deficiency of information. It must proceed from some latent passion; and though we are not authorised to censure or condemn him, most certainly Almighty God, who is witness to this latent depravity, will not hold him guiltless. This doubt is voluntary before God, and deprives him of the glorious title of *member* of the Catholic Church. In a word, that Christian only is out of her *interior* communion, who voluntarily refuses to sub-

mit to her decrees: whether he positively resists conviction, or *by his own fault*, neglects information.

Let us now analyze the faith of private judgment. Whoever adopts this principle must indeed begin with us, but he cannot keep pace with us long. He believes whatever tenets he has thought proper to raise to the dignity of articles of faith, because God has revealed them: he knows they are revealed, because he finds them *evidently delivered in the bible*. He knows he reads right, because the scriptures are *plain, and do not suffer any one* of the meanest capacity *to err*. This he *knows*, although St. Peter, common sense, and experience prove it false.

This must be the faith of every one, who casts off the *dead weight of authority*.

I shall now take notice of some trivial matters, which I have purposely passed over to avoid confusion. Mr. Wharton says, page 18, that Bellarmin being questioned about his faith, answered; "That he believed what the Church believed; and the Church believed what he believed." Had Mr. Wharton looked into Bellarmin, he would have found this grossly misrepresented. The fact is, Bellarmin, *De arte bene moriendi, lib. 2. c. 9.* gives the following story in the words of Barrochius: "Two intimate divines lived in the same monastery. One of them died, and some time after appeared to his friend, informing him that he was damned. The other inquiring the reason received for answer, that the Devil appeared to him, in his last moments, and questioned him about his belief of the Trinity; he, confiding in his own abilities, entered upon a dispute with the fiend: who soon made him waver, and then perverted his faith in this *fundamental article*; and in this error he died." This relation so frightened the surviving Religious, that he took a resolution not to engage in controversy with that cunning reasoner, especially in the critical hour of death. Some time after this he also died, and in his last moments was heard to say; "*I believe what the Church believes*;" and then again:



again: "*the Church believes what I believe.*" This is the whole of what Bellarmin says, and all in the words of Barrochius.

Should such a thing happen to Mr. Wharton, I think he would do well to imitate the latter; I fear he would otherwise risk the loss of some *fundamental article* of his creed. The *private judgment* of this able controvertist might possibly pervert Mr. Wharton's *reason and conscience*, should he venture to dispute the case in the languishing state of sickness, under the terrors of approaching dissolution. It is indeed to be lamented, that Mr. Wharton could not consistently appeal to the *dead weight of authority*, this he has cast off; but he might invoke the *dead letter* of the scriptures: "I believe what the bible teaches;" and "the bible teaches what I believe."

I know well, that the Devil would laugh at him: would insist upon it, that this is not a *rational investigation*; that he might as well appeal to the Alcoran: and finally that he ought to determine the articles, which the bible declares necessary. This I defy him to do at present, though in perfect health.

Mr. Wharton may call this a legendary tale; and, if it will please him, I will join him in his incredulity. But where is candor to be found, in such glaring misrepresentations.

Page the 29th, Mr. Wharton gives us the sources of his religious information; which he read with *great attention*, after he had cast off the *dead weight of authority*, not before. So that in fact he was a good protestant, before he instituted any investigation at all. I wish, for the sake of his candor, he had studied Bossuet either before or after he read the divines he mentions.

I shall say very little about the law of celibacy of the clergy. It is but a law: and therefore stands on the basis of every other point of discipline; these are matters of such a nature, as to be altered and abrogated, when ever the Church thinks proper. But till she does, it is but decency in private persons to respect her mandates,

which they may condemn, because they do not understand her motives. The date of this law cannot be found; and therefore we may justly presume that it came from the Apostles: whenever it is mentioned in ancient times, it is done with respect: if ever we find it broke through, this is censured as an abuse: and although some private facts may possibly be found, where the Church did not fulminate against her refractory sons; yet she never approved of, or gave a sanction to the violation thereof.

The various mischiefs arising from it proceed from bad men breaking through the most solemn engagements made with God and the Church. If this be a reason for abrogating this law, the commandments themselves should be abolished. If God will excuse Mr. Wharton from the obligation of this law of the Church, because he has thus publicly withdrawn himself from her society, as he says, I am satisfied. Would Mr. Wharton exempt a Christian from the gospel-rules, if he turned Jew?

The essay on celibacy, quoted page 17. is such a strange perversion of scripture; such a scandalous libel of the ancients eminent for learning or sanctity, that it is not really worth my notice. I shall however remark, that the Church can most certainly determine, whether the state of celibacy or marriage is more perfect according to the doctrine of universal tradition, as already explained. The author had much better have argued from St. Paul, that he was burning, and therefore was determined to marry. This was all that either Catholics or Protestants expected from him. It is in fact all that can be said in defence of a sacrilegious violation of the double ties of order and solemn vow. How our separated brethren can support the charge against Catholics, in imputing to them, whether they will or will not; the doctrine of *breaking faith with heretics*; and still can cherish and protect those, who wantonly sport with the obligation of faith given to God himself, is a mystery, which I could never unravel.

It is hardly necessary to take notice of Mr. Wharton's reasoning against infallibility, page 26. from the Church defining her own authority. I have proved her infallible from the nature of universal tradition, where then is the circle of false reasoning?

I must however remind Mr. Wharton of a *known fact*, that every established authority has a legal right to decide on its own privileges. This is done every day in our courts of judicature. If the authority so deciding be supreme, without appeal, as is the Parliament in England, and the Church in doctrinal points, these decrees are law against any opposition whatever.

Mr. Wharton's note, page 35, is good Catholic doctrine. He teaches, from the Catechism of the Council of Trent, that we are to believe *in* God the Father, and *in* the Son, and *in* the Holy Ghost; but when we come to the 9th article, we believe only the *existence* of a holy Catholic Church; we do not say, *in* the Church: because to believe *in* God implies that we consider him as the object of our *faith, hope, and love*; which cannot be said of the Church. This is all true: and a Catholic pastor must be very negligent or ignorant indeed, if he does not instruct his flock in this particular. But how does this doctrine conduce to put an end to all controversy between us? The characters and notes of the Catholic Church are fully delivered in that chapter of the Catechism; her inerrancy established, &c. I see no way of finishing the controversy between us, unless Mr. Wharton thinks proper to abandon private judgment, and submit to the authority of the Church.

Mr. Wharton says, page 38, that the religion he has chosen "is the religion of an Usher, a Wilfon, an Hoadly, and a Newton;" &c. His catalogue would have sounded as well, had it been graced with the names of a Chrysostom, a Jerom, an Ambrose, an Austin. Even a Leo might have added weight to the others. But they were all Catholics, and the last a Roman Pontiff. The lives of Antonin, Trajan and Titus were more beneficial



beneficial to mankind, than any of his worthies, without impeaching the character of any of them.

I shall just hint at the authorities quoted by Mr. Wharton, pages 37, and 38.

St. Chrysostom is quoted wrong: in his 13th, not 12th hom. *in Gen.* are found the words, where he asserts, that the "scripture expounds itself, and does not suffer the reader to err." But he should not be strained from one particular *fact*, to an universal inference of both *facts* and *doctrines*. He is reasoning against those who mentioned that paradise, in which the Almighty Creator placed our first parents, was in heaven, not on earth. This he says is contrary to the express assertion of the bible, *which expounds itself*: and so it does as to this fact: but who in his senses will say the same of every other passage in the bible? I cannot think that St. Chrysostom would ever contradict St. Peter, 2 Ep. iii. 16. The work quoted a second time, hom. 49. *in Matth.* is not his genuine work, as I have fully proved.

What is quoted from St. Cyprian is rather unlucky for Mr. Wharton, Ep. 74. St. Cyprian had written to consult St. Stephen Bishop of Rome concerning the re-baptizing heretics. The Pope answered, let no innovation take place, but stick to tradition. St. Cyprian, in this epistle, complains that the Roman Pontiff preferred human tradition, to the clear principles of the scriptures. This learned prelate had forgot himself for the moment; and thinking, that his *private judgment*, his reason and conscience authorised him to re-baptize those, who had been baptized by heretics; he inferred that the tradition of St. Stephen was not *divine* nor *universal*, but only *partial* and human tradition of the Roman diocese.

I hope Mr. Wharton will allow, that St. Stephen was in the right, and St. Cyprian wrong. How then can this favour Mr. Wharton? I think it a direct proof against him. Mr. Wharton, with the whole collection of

of the Reformation, has abandoned the opinion of St. Cyprian, who endeavoured to prove his principle<sup>s</sup> from his own private interpretation of the scriptures, and with the Catholics, has adopted the sentiment of the Roman Pontiff, which rests solely on tradition. Let Mr. Wharton read the same epistle through, and he will find that St. Cyprian admits the authority of tradition, when well established; as well as in many other places.

St. Hilary, lib. 2. *De Trinit.* is brought in, and made to say, "Where is this deficiency, where is this obscurity? In the word of God, all things are full and perfect, as coming from a perfect being." But St. Hilary does not say a word about the scriptures. Mr. Wharton put that in from his own head, because the words of St. Hilary prove nothing without it: The Saint is reasoning, from the form of baptism, to prove the Trinity, and then he says: "For what is not contained in this sacrament of human salvation? what is wanting, or obscure? Every thing is full and perfect, as coming from a perfect being." Is this candor! !!

I am surprised, Mr. Wharton should quote St. Austin *De unitate Ecclesiæ*. The very title of the book stabs schism and heresy to the heart. If the Church is only one, what becomes of those who divide themselves from her. St. Austin proves at large, and from scripture too, that the Church of Christ is the visible Catholic communion of those, who adhere together as members of the same Church, guided by her authority; he strives throughout to evince, that the Donatists are not in the way to salvation, because they are out of her communion. He says, lib. Cont. Ep. fund. *That he would not believe the gospel, if the authority of the Church did not compel him to it.* Mr. Wharton will not abide by this.

I had accidentally passed over his quotations of St. Justin Martyr, page 24, which is nothing to the purpose: and Vincentius Lerin. page 35. This is a direct  
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proof of every thing I have advanced concerning universal tradition. Let Mr. Wharton remember, that in the same book he will find, "What was always, and every where, and by every one believed, is not an error, but delivered by tradition."

Here I shall take my leave of Mr. Wharton. Had I followed my own feelings, I should have given more ample explications; but the general cry, *Be short*; has caused me to contract this pamphlet to a few pages, while the matter requires volumes. I hope I have done enough to confirm the faith of those to whom I dedicate this address.

Wherefore, my fellow-christians of Worcester, and whoever else may think this tract worth reading, let us all remember, that there is but *one faith*, the same as *one God*, and *one baptism*. Eph. iv. 5. This faith is a gift of God, which we may justly forfeit by our fault. We most certainly do forfeit this blessing, when we fall into any *voluntary error* in revealed doctrines. Any *wilful error* would therefore destroy faith, however *partial* it may be deemed by those who are separated from us. The Church therefore cannot subscribe to any error, without losing her title to divine faith; and consequently, she would cease to be the Church of Christ; where there is no faith, there can be no Church. She would cease to be the *pillar and ground of truth*, 1 Tim. iii. 15. *Without spot or wrinkle*, Eph. v. *The gates of hell would most certainly prevail against her*, contrary to the express promise of her Divine Spouse, Math. xvi.

Jesus Christ has promised, that the *Comforter* should abide with his flock for ever, to teach them all truth, John xiv. 16. The same Holy Spirit has given to the Church, *some Apostles, some doctors, &c.* 1 Cor. xii. has constituted *bishops to govern the Church of God*, Acts. xx. These have always received their ordination and mission from that Church, which alone was planted by the Apostles. She has always exerted her authority by teaching her children



children, and casting off from her communion refractory and rebellious innovators.

To this Church alone the whole world is indebted for the name of Christian. This, our dear country, was converted to the faith of Jesus Christ by a *Benedictin* monk, sent hither by a Roman Pontiff, who says that he celebrated the sacrifice of the Mass three times on *Christmas-day*. Greg. Mag. hom. 8. in Evang. That very name, and several others in the Calendar, are taken from the Mass.

This Church has been exalted above all other Societies, by an infinite number of the brightest characters in the world: by legions of martyrs, who shed their blood in defence of her faith: by numbers of learned doctors, equally conspicuous for the sanctity of their lives: by millions of hermits and religious, of both sexes, who *forsook all they had to follow Christ*, in the narrow paths of the Evangelical counsels. Martyrs, Confessors, Virgins, the Saints of all nations and ages since the Christian æra, were members of the Catholic Church, governed by the Bishop of Rome. This is the Catholic Church which you believe in your creed. *Christian is her name, and Catholic her surname*, S. Pacian ad Sympron. Novat. By this she is distinguished from every conventicle. By this she is equally known to her friends and her enemies.

“ We must remain in that Church, which was founded by the Apostles, and continues to this day. If you hear of any, who pretend to belong to Christ, yet are not called after our Lord Jesus Christ, but after some other as Marionites, Valentinians, Mountaineers, Field-preachers, (let me add Lutherans, Calvinists, &c.) know that they are not the Church of Christ; but the synagogue of Antichrist.—Nor let them flatter themselves, if they seem to prove what they say from the scriptures; for the Devil said something from the scriptures. The scriptures do not consist in  
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" the reading, but in the right understanding." St. Hierom, *Dialog. adv. Lucifer.*

" Should you go into a city, do not enquire simply, where is the house of the Lord; for impious heretics do not hesitate to call their houses the houses of the Lord; although they are polluted. Neither enquire precisely, where there is a Church, but where is the *Catholic Church*; for that is the proper name of this holy mother of us all, the spouse of our Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God." St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesi* 18.

" Let us adhere to the Christian religion, and to the communication of that Church, which is called and is Catholic; not only by its own members, but even by its enemies. For heretics and schismatics, whether they will or will not, when they speak, not among themselves, but to strangers, never call the Catholic Church by any other name than *Catholic*. Nor could they be understood, unless they called her by that name, which the whole world gives her." St. August. *De vera relig.* c. 7.

" Many reasons keep me in her (the Church) communion. The consent of people and nations keep me in it. The succession of Bishops in the chair of Peter the Apostle — to the present episcopacy. Lastly the name of Catholic keeps me therein, of which this Church alone is with good reason in possession, among so many heresies. So that although all heretics wish to be called Catholics, if a stranger inquire for the Catholic meeting, no heretic will shew him to his own house." *Idem contra Epist. fund.*

Let us all take care to live and to die in the communion of this Church. But let us remember, that faith without morals will not save us. He who knows the will of his master, and does not perform it, shall be beaten with many stripes; while he who knows it not, will be excused, if his ignorance be involuntary. Who knows how many of our separated brethren are more pleasing

pleasing to God than many of us! Let us not despise or condemn any one; but leave the honest and sincere to the mercies of an infinitely good God; and pray for those who err through passion and prejudice: that the film may be removed from their eyes, and seeing the truth, may join the Church, that there may be but *one sheep-fold and one Pastor.*

This charity prescribes, this our religion orders. In fine, let us all walk worthy our vocation, lest while, with the Jews, we glory in our religion, we like them hear the dreadful sentence pronounced by Jesus Christ: "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation which will produce the fruits thereof." Matth. xxi. 43.

F I N I S.





7/05